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Welcome to the Human Oddity edition of TOXIC HORROR.

Some of the freaks
you'll see on these pages
are real!

You're having bad dreams. Those birth defect babies keep appearing in the hotel lobby. At least you think they are birth defect babies. If pressed, you'd have to admit that you aren't sure what they are. But they're there, with hideous bug-eyes peering out of gray jelly molded into the shape of a scoop of ice cream. They have a bump for a nose, a slash for a mouth and no discernable arms, legs or genitalia. Their carbunkled mouths fall gaping open now and again and spew gurgling black sludge—stuff that looks like it was dredged from the bottom of the East River and smells like a dying woman's gums. That stuff makes the plastic mat—the mat that covers the shag rug like a bib—sizzle and smell like a guitar pick that's exploded in an ashtray. The monsters make infant sounds of pain each time they puke tar, and you have to jump out of the way. You don't want that shit on your Converse All Stars, do you? There are tears in the bloated fisheyes of nature's little mistakes. You wonder who gives birth to such curiosities. Those eyes have cataracts, except they follow your every move with pleas for mercy. The lobby is plush.

A carpeted spiraling staircase leads up to the rooms. A dead baby floats in a well-lit aquarium. There are colorful strobe lights throbbing to the beat of an obsolete rock and roll song. For a moment, you see a breast and you are opening your fingers very wide so you can hold the whole thing at once. Your vision is blurred for the diversion, soft-focus vaseline on the lens of your dream. The light show fragments and permutes like droplets of dyed water on a vibrating plate of glass. You are about to clutch it, take it into your tender grasp when your eyes clear and you are about to caress the head of a gurgling gray monster, cataract eyes soft at the thought of impending kindness. You recoil your hand in horror as your skin covers with gooseflesh. A cold sweat, bitter and almondy, breaks out on your forehead. The strobes look like Christmas tree lights in the baby's shimmering flesh. What you had thought to be a nipple was a clumsy excuse for a lock of hair right on the tip of its pointy little head...

Welcome to the Human Oddity edition of TOXIC HORROR. Some of the freaks on these pages are real. If you toss yer cookies, please don't send it to us in a baggie.

GGD

So real you can almost hear them DRIP!



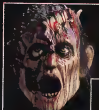
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This issue: *Re-Animator*, more Herschell Gordon Lewis, *Fright Night II*, *Pet Semetary*, plus other gross stuff!

LAFFS AND BARFS!

Very loosely based on a story by H.P. Lovecraft, Stuart Gordon's *Re-animator* (Vestron Video, 1988, 88 minutes, available in R and unrated versions) is one of the best horror flicks of the eighties, an energetic and deliciously gruesome sci-fi splatterfest and the first (and best) directorial effort of Chicago's Stuart Gordon. In a Massachusetts med school, looney scientist Herbert West (Jeffrey Combs, in a solid performance) is working on a serum to bring back the dead, enlisting the aid of fellow med student Danny Kane (Bruce Abbott). Initial experiments on Kane's pussycat go awry, but that doesn't stop creepy West from trying his serum out on some convenient cadavers at the med center, one of whom runs amok and flattens no less than the med school dean and father of Kane's main squeeze, Barbara Crampton (who should really do something about that name). Waiting in the wings is the smarmy brain surgeon Dr. Hill (Robert Sampson), who opposes West's experiments but attempts to rip him off all the same and take the credit. Not to be outdone, West decapitates Hill and then re-animates him. The sight of the headless quack toting around his own noggin is something that has to be seen to be believed! Even better, Hill has the by-now lobotomized dean deliver up the beautiful, naked Crampton, where he proceeds to give her—literally—head, in the flick's sickest

and most outrageous scenes. Even hardcore splatter devotees were stunned into silence by this.

Re-animator benefits from Gordon's fast-paced, an abundance of stomach-churning FX, good ensemble thesping, and, best of all, it doesn't take itself too seriously, going for laughs as well as barfs. Gordon's two subsequent efforts, *From Beyond* and *Dolls*, while enjoyable, do not even come close to matching the manic perversity and primal shocks of *Re-animator*. If you haven't yet checked out this one, you don't know what you're missing.

—Gary Goldstein

ROADKILL ON THE REBOUND

It's taken Stephen King's best novel, *Pet Semetary*, a long time to reach the screen. When the novel was first published, George Romero, hot off the success of *Creepshow* and *Down of the Dead*, was originally set to direct. Romero fans were delighted; King fans were not. Romero was more of an action director, it was argued, and *Pet Semetary's* emphasis was more on characterization and mood. Somehow, though, the movie never got made, thanks to the disappointing box office take on the film versions of King's earlier novels, *Dead Zone*, *Christine*, and *Firestarter*.

To everyone's surprise (most notably Paramount

***Pet Semetary* (Paramount Home Video). Give a kid a scalpel and you know he's gonna cut something!**





execs), *Pet Sematary* (Paramount Home Video, 98 minutes, directed by Mary Lambert) was the surprise horror hit of 1989, raking in a cool ninety mil at the box office, despite the fact that pre-release publicity was sparse and the film was not



press screened for the critics, a surefire sign of a stinker. Likewise, the recently-released vid version is also performing well.

Louis Creed (Dale Midkiff), his wife, Rachel (Denise Crosby), young daughter Ellie, and two-year-old son Gage have just moved to rural Maine, where Louis is to become resident physician at the local university. Across the street resides the town duffer, Jud Crandall (Fred Gwynne), who does a lot of philosophizing and knocks back great quantities of Budweiser (who doubtless had a few bucks invested in the flick). On no less than Louis's first day on the job, a young jock is broadsided by a car and promptly expires, (but not before warning Louis to stay away from the local title site) and conveniently pops up now and then as the Creed family spirit guide. But when daughter Ellie's cat, Churchill, becomes a victim of roadkill, Louis ignores the advice and allows Jud to bury the feline in an old Indian burial ground, popular with the townsfolk for reanimating the dead. True to form, the cat returns and smells

badly. Next up for roadkill status is young Gage, who chases a kite into the path of a high-balling semi and is literally knocked out of his size three Nikes. Against Jud's warning, Louis replants his son in the pet sematary and the toddler promptly returns, a baby from hell with a fondness for scalpels—which he uses to dispatch Jud and his mother. Clearly, the Creed clan has had a very bad week.

King has stripped away everything but the bare bone of the plot in adapting *Pet Sematary* for the screen, and even tossed out the pivotal character of Jud's wife, Norma (whom Louis saves from death in the novel), replacing her with a laundress who is dying of cancer and hangs herself (which brought cries of "do it! do it!" from the 42nd Street audience). In making this switch, King undercuts all of Jud's motivation for revealing to Louis the existence of the pet sematary in the first place.

Also working against the film version of *Pet Sematary* is the casting: Dale Midkiff and Denise Crosby are pretty weak, leaving Fred Gwynne

***Re-Animator* (Vestron Video) takes slapstick gore to new levels of vulgarity!**

to turn in the only believable performance. ("Shit, that be Herman Munster," commented one moviegoer.)

Despite all of these shortcomings, however, *Pet Sematary* works, generating some genuine last-reel shocks and suspense. And director Lambert doesn't shy away from the more disturbing elements of the story. *Pet Sematary* will please King buffs and horror flick aficionados alike.

—Gary Goldstein

BLOODSUCKING SISTER HAS SCORE TO SETTLE

Tommy Lee Wallace has made a lucrative career out of directing sequels to hit movies (*Halloween III*, *Amityville II*); his mediocre track record continues in *Fright Night II* (1989, International Video Entertainment, 108 minutes), a serviceable but



***Fright Night II* (IVE). She gives the best hickeys in town—and all you have to do is buy her a drink.**

somewhat uninspired follow-up to Tom Holland's excellent 1985 horror hit.

Charlie Brewster (a chubbier William Ragsdale, reprising his role from *Fright Night*), now a college student, is paying weekly visits to a shrink (Ernie Sabella, in one of the video's best performances), who, predictably, has Charlie convinced that vampires don't exist. Charlie also has a new squeeze (Traci Lin), who wants to be a clinical psychiatrist but who looks like

she'd be more at home in Bloomingdale's.

Peter Vincent, Vampire Hunter (the always welcome Roddy McDowell), no worse for the wear from battling Chris Sarandon's Jerry Dandrige, is back hosting *Fright Night* on TV. Into the pre-war apartment building moves a sultry New Age performance artist, Regine Dandrige (Julie Carmen) and her creepy, otherworldly goon squad that includes a male punker with a fondness for eye shadow, an insect-eating, Renfield-like Schwarzenegger clone, and a brain-dead longhair who could have been left over from *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (Jonathan Gries,

Russell Clark, and Brian Thompson). Turns out Regine's visit is no coincidence—she's the late Jerry Dandrige's bloodsucking sister who has a score to settle with Ragsdale and McDowell.

To this end, she proceeds to seduce 'n' suck Ragsdale until he's in danger of joining the ranks of the undead. Even worse, she gets McDowell booted from *Fright Night* and takes the job herself. (Ratings are ratings, after all.) From this point on, *Fright Night II* slides along smoothly, if predictably, until the climactic man-against-vampire stake-fest.

Lacking the stylish wit, the manic pacing, and the

topnotch performances of the original, *Fright Night II* emerges as an okay time-filler, a notch or two above most of the horror product available in video stores. But be warned: fans of Tom Holland's original will probably be disappointed.

—Gary Goldstein

GIVE THE LITTLE LADY A HAND

As *The Crawling Hand* (b&w, 1963, Rhino Video) begins, an astronaut returning from the moon has had his body possessed by a

The teen girl dies slowest, heaving and heaving till the sauce gurgles from her mouth!

lunar parasite. In a fine example of absurd cinematic euthanasia, scientists back home blow up the astronaut's capsule to relieve his suffering. Only his infected hand survives, landing on a California beach where it is found by the frolicking and amorous teenagers, hero Paul and his Swedish girlfriend Marta. The first person strangled by the hand (actually, *The Crowding Arm* would have been a better title for this picture, as the limb is intact all the way up to the elbow) is Paul's aging and slightly flirtatious landlady, Mrs. Hodgekiss. Later, Paul becomes infected. You can tell when a human is under the spell of the lunar whatchamacallits because they develop big black somnambulist circles around their eyes—makeup straight out of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Playing the sheriff investigating the murders is Alan Hale, Jr. (the Skipper on *Gilligan's Island*). In Michael Weldon's *Psychotronic Encyclopedia* it says that one of the best things about this picture is the playing of the song "Papa Oom Mow Mow" twice. The song doesn't appear at all. Weldon is referring to the similar "Bird" by The Rivingtons—the same song Pee Wee Herman sings in *Back to the Beach*.

—Rita Leonessa

his motorcycle. The bike crashes and the teens end up impaled on a fence. The teen girl is the slowest to die, heaving and heaving until the sauce gurgles from her mouth.

Now it is 18 years later and Brooke (Maureen Mooney) is a teacher at the most boonish high school in the history of bad cinema. The kids are mean, the coach who is asking her out looks like Larry "Bud" Melman, and she can't even touch herself in an impure manner in the shower without some pervert peeking in through the window at her. (Most of the prank-loving kids appear to be in their

late twenties.) When a gang of rowdies break into her home in Halloween masks and attempt rape, she freaks out, thinking the teens she killed as a child have returned to haunt her. Brooke attempts suicide, jumping out the window. It isn't long before her eyes open, however, and she goes on a rampage of revenge.

The plot may be used, but there is a lot about writer, producer and director Douglas Crossman's depiction of small town high school that strikes home: the dirt roads back by the thruway, parking by the railroad tracks, drinking beer before English class...For those who are interested, the video contains a lot of mature teen nudity. I'll take the puppy with the pink nose. Body count: 6.

—MacIntyre Symms

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK IN THE SEWER

Upside down artichokes come up out of the sewers of L.A., murder everyone (except for the six-person cast) and build a dome of fog around the city—a dome that somehow turns hard and becomes impenetrable. Such is the heavy-handed anti-pollution symbolism of *The Slime People* (b&w, 1962, *Rhino Video*). The *Slime People* make the sound of a gurgling sink drain when they walk. Sometimes they sound more like a pig cinking underwater.

The Slime People (Rhino Video). They look like artichokes, live in the sewer, and prefer blondes!

TEENS WHO DESERVE TO DIE

In the opening sequence of *Hell High* (Prism Entertainment, 82 minutes) a little blonde girl named Brooke accidentally kills two despicable teenagers. She is mad at the boy for tearing the head off of her doll, so she throws mud in his face as he and his girlfriend pass on



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Since the monsters have emerged from the sewers, "slime" seems pretty euphemistic. Perhaps the filmmakers thought *The Sewage People* would have hurt box office.

Like the monsters in the classic *Horror of Party Beach*, these creatures know martial arts techniques. Luckily, so do our heroes, a Marine and

a pilot.

The film contains three scenes in which bad actresses feign hysteria with winning the Oscar on their minds.

The cast consists of the heroes, two sisters who provide their love interests, the girls' scientist dad, and a nut-zoid fiction writer who's lost his ability to distinguish fact

from make-believe.

The best line in the movie comes just after the young Marine has kissed his girl for the first time. "Gee whiz, Bonnie, sittin' here like this—I don't even want to think about Slime People!"

This film would be worth seeing just for the laughs, if it weren't for the fog. To effect the fog—and perhaps

to cover up the phoniness of the monster suits—a layer of the pea soup was put onto practically every scene (all of the exterior shots, and there are many of those), so most of the time it's very difficult to see exactly what's going on.

—Rita Leonessa

BIG CHUNKS OF RED GOOEY GUNK!

Herschell Gordon Lewis' *The Wizard of Gore* (Rhino Video, 1968, 96 minutes) stars Montag the Magnificent (Ray Sager), a hypnotist and magician with a puke-worthy Grand-Guignol act. He gruesomely offs a series of beautiful blondes in front of a comically small audience (maybe 16 people, like the audience for a decidedly local version of *Bowling For Dollars*). Victim #1 is cut in two with a chainsaw—the first cinematic instance of this power tool being used for simulated human slaughter. Montag sticks his hands in the babe's guts and plays with her internal organs, like a coroner in a candy shop. Victim #2 has a steel spike driven through her ear, clear through her brain. Montag sticks his fingers, and then his whole hand, into her ear, so he can pull out her brains piece by piece. When all of the gray matter has leaked through his fingers onto the floor, he uses those blood-caked fingers to pluck out her eyes. Animal eyes pressed against the inside of a mask were used for the effect. The scene originally contained the squeezing of an extracted eyeball so that the jelly squirted, but this has now been snipped.

Victim #3 has her mid-section aerated by a Black and Decker punch press. Again, the illusionist reaches

right inside the woman's body so he can yank out big chunks of red gooey gunk. Victims #3 and #4 (a twofor!) have their tongues cut out. Then swords are shoved down their throats, deep, deeper, deepest, until they are croaked. Yeah, it's an illusion, but after the show Montag's victims are really dying--and of the same wounds they suffered on stage. To catch the killer, our heroine Sherry Carson (Judy Cler), hostess of an afternoon TV talk show for housewives, agrees to become Montag's next stage victim. Will hero Wayne Ratay arrive in time to save her?

It's 1968 now. Lewis' directing style remains the same. Only the hair-dos have changed.

—B.W. Frazier

THE SOUTH'S GONNA RISE AGIN'!

There's nothing creepier, if you're a Yank, than porous Southern Hospitality, i.e. a gang of good ol' folks (women looking like Daisy Mae, men with their belts buckled below their beer bellies) aglow and rowdy with simultaneous self-satisfaction, hate and hunger. Such a pack provides the menace in Herschell Gordon Lewis' *2000 Maniacs* (Rhino Video, 1964, 75 minutes).

The time: 1965. The setting: Pleasant Valley, Georgia, 110 miles from Augusta, where the townpeople are busy with The Centennial Celebration of Blood Vengeance on the 100th anniversary of the end of the War Between the States. Northerners are being lured into town (with a fake "detour" sign), slaughtered in imaginative ways, and roasted over a fire at the barbecue.

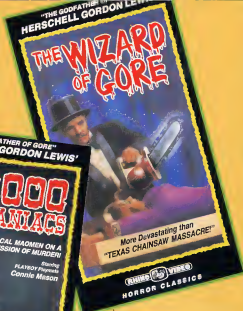
This immediate follow-up

to *Blood Feast* features the usual HGL high school acting, manikin-and-ketchup FX, and a bluegrass soundtrack



provided by The Pleasant Valley Boys. The stars are Thomas Wood and former Playboy playmate Connie Mason (both of whom also

starred in *Blood Feast*). Connie has the best line in the movie: "Mayor Buttman, what's that on that spit over



there?"

The first victim (blonde Shelby Livingston) has her thumb cut off, then, much later, as she's screaming bloody murder, has her right arm chopped off with an axe. The second (Jerome Eden) has his extremities tied to four horses who are then allowed to gallop away. The third (Michael Korb), is rolled down a hill inside a barrel lined with nails. The final victim (Yvonne Gilbert) is bound spread-eagle on the ground while a huge bolder is dropped on her. Hee haw!

—Vid Viscount



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Apocalypse is in the air. The East's deadliest assassin, a sharpshooter who never misses, comes to America to ply his trade. A paunchy masked wrestler turned private dick battles monsters. Psycho killers race cross-country to their next murder spree. Rock and roll is unmasked as a Druidic conspiracy to seduce the young into Satan-worship. Mankind has been cursed throughout the ages by the hybrid spawn of killer man-apes lurking among us.

No, that's not the headlines from today's newspaper; not yet, anyway. It's only a sampling of these revelatory comics—comics from Heaven, from Hell, from beyond Hell, from the dawn of time, and even from Japan.

Before we get to the fun, a tragic note: from Archie Comics comes the devastating announcement that they're cancelling their "adult" line. **TOXIC** deeply regrets the loss of such long-awaited "for mature audiences only" versions of *The Fly*, *Black Comet*, and *The Double Life of Pvt. Strong*...Now, they belong to the ages.

It's Wild! It's Weird! It's...**BLAB!** So goes the slogan of Monte Beauchamp's digest-sized **BLAB** magazine devoted to "eye-quenching mania," and it's no lie. Editor/designer Beauchamp has put together a slick, high-quality package crammed with words and pictures from way out there.

The cover of **BLAB #3** is by writer-artist Charles Burns. So is **HARD-BOILED DEFECTIVE STORIES**,

a collection of strange tales starring "El Borbáh," a seedy masked wrestler turned manhunter. The masked man bulls his way through a bizarre world of crooks, crackpots, creatures, and creeps. Dynamic black-and-white art depicts a decaying urb where mutants and things lurk just around every corner. Pistol-packing pint-sized killers, wire-headed zombies, and crazed cultists are no match for El Borbáh, one of the rare

handful of big-bellied costumed crime-fighters. (Watchmen's "Comedian" is another; stuff like *The Inferior Five* doesn't count).

Back to **BLAB #3**. Bob Stewart's witty, detailed history of Bazooka Joe, he of the eye-patch and Topps' bubble gum fame, is prime

Ever feel like you needed a jumpstart just to get out of bed in the morning? From Blab. Art by XNO.

GROWN MEN WHO SELL COMIC BOOKS?! THEY ARE...

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BENNY



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"CHAPPY"

Joe Coleman, Drew PROTONG,

The art of Joe Coleman. Ultimate toxicity! From *Blab*.

esoterica. He puts forth the proposition that a key Bazooka Joe artist in the 'Thirties also cranked out eight-page cartoon erotica on the sly, like "Molly Had It," "How One Wife Made it Pay," and "A Lesson in Love" (with Charlie McCarthy, famed unfunny ventriloquist's dummy!)

The incredible Joe Coleman weighs in with a 20-page nihilistic epic, "The Final Days of Paul John Knowles," which alone makes this a collector's item. It's the story of a doomed (and how!) "love" affair between a woman reporter and a psycho killer on the road to Hell. Robert Bloch, S. Clay Wilson, and Jim Thompson have written similar territory, to name a few, but Joe Coleman brings an intensely disturbing personal vision to this material, one that's far removed from your comfortable genre "chills." He's the Bosch of America's low-rent underbelly badlands, and his **PAUL JOHN KNOWLES** is don't-miss, if your nerves can take it.

There's also XNO's Wolvertonish **DATING DEPOT**, some other moderately amusing features, and a long (too long) symposium of underground cartoonists' essays on the subject, **WHAT ROBERT CRUMB MEANS TO ME**. **BLAB #3** finishes big with funster Drew Friedman's **COMIC SHOP CLERKS OF NORTH AMERICA**, a rude portrait gallery of that'll really put **BLAB** in solid with the guys who stack the racks. (Of course, you fellows know that **TOXIC** deeply respects your retailing expertise. So how about giving the mag an extra push this month?)

The December '89 issue of National Lampoon, yes, the National Lampoon, (now co-owned by actor Tim Matheson, "Otter" from **ANIMAL HOUSE**-ga figure) justifies its existence with the awesome docudrama, "Joey Heatherton." Script by Josh Alan Friedman, art by Drew Friedman. This is their longest, most ambitious piece since the mind-shattering "Mr. Excitement: The Wayne Newton Story," in their big Fantagraphics' anthology, **ANY SIMILARITY TO PERSONS LIVING OR DEAD**. If you don't have it—why not?

Drew Friedman's got the cover of **BLAB #4**. Inside, there's clever Dan Clowes' "666," cartooning attractions of Armageddon; too much Jaxon on under-

Severed head under glass from Blab. Art by XNO.



ground comics, Garbage Kids Confidential, the inside story, more **XNO**, and yes, more Joe Coleman.

BLAB #5, scheduled for Spring 1990 and eagerly anticipated, will be the all-crime issue, featuring a Joe Coleman cover and a 21-page epic, Friedman,

Clowes, 3-Day maven Ray Zone on crime comics...

Order **BLAB** direct at \$7.95 per copy plus \$1.00 for postage and handling to: Kitchen Sink Press/No. 2 Swamp Road/Princeton, WI 54968 (Hey, wasn't Ed Gein from Wisconsin, too?)

GOLGO 13 crosses the Pacific to make his American comic book debut in **THE IMPOSSIBLE HIT**. In Japan, writer-artist Takao Saito's invincible assassin has appeared in 63 wildly popular volumes. There's been at least one full-length animated feature, a live-action film is in the works, and now there's even a **GOLGO 13** Nintendo game, **TOP SECRET EPISODE**.

GOLGO 13 (possibly derived from Golgotha, the Hill of Skulls overlooking Jerusalem), is the code-name of international contract killer Duke Togo (which may be an alias, too). He's a one-man wrecking crew for hire, tackling near-impossible missions of destruction, leaving mountains of dead men in his wake.

Picture Charles Bronson in

Coleman's piece tells the story of a doomed love affair between a woman reporter and a psycho killer on the road to Hell!

THE MECHANIC, only Japanese, operating in a James Bond world minus 007's state-sanctioned licence to kill. Duke Togo honors only his own code of conduct, a code whose greatest good is defined as Getting The Job Done. He won't hesitate to kill innocent bystanders, even women and children, if they stand between him and his goal. He makes Mike Hammer look soft-hearted. There's a coldness here, an iciness unlike just about anything else in American or Japanese comics. It's refreshing.

Sorry to report, after all that build-up, that **GOLGO 13**'s Stateside debut, **THE IMPOSSIBLE HIT**, is good but not great. It's a tricky puzzle story about the long-shot kill of a big-business Mob boss. Pretty tame stuff, when compared to the heavy firepower and body count this series is famed for. It's still a good tough high-tech crime yarn, though, with a snap ending that's a real twisteroo. Still, the folks at Vic Tokai, Inc. should stop pulling their punches and

give us the hardhitting epics that have made **GOLGO 13** Japan's most popular graphic novel for almost two decades. We can take it.

GOLGO 13 is available at your local dealer, or order direct from: Vic Tokai, Inc./22904 Lockmass Ave./Torrance, CA 90501/Phone: 213-320-1199.

If you thought BLAB was weird, wait until you **BEHOLD!!! THE PROTONG**. That's the title of the book, **BEHOLD!!! THE PROTONG**, with three exclamation points. A volume that proves yet again the truth of the old saw, that a thin line divides genius from madness.

Ray Zone's informative introduction gives a brief account of **PROTONG** creator Stanislaw Szukalski's eventful life. Born in Poland in 1893, he was hailed as her greatest living genius in 1936. Fleeing the Nazis, he spent the next fifty years in Burbank, California, churning out reams of writings and drawings. 39 volumes of

writings and over 40,000 drawings, all of which were met with near-universal indifference. He lived long enough to write the introduction to **PROTONG**, whose contents were selected by editors Glenn Bray and Lena Zwalve, a labor of love if ever there was one.

A collector of anthropological oddities, he turned mountains of facts into dizzying cosmic scenarios. His theories were buttressed with thousands of detailed pen-and-ink drawings of "The Most Primordial Images in the World": Stone Age cave paintings, Peruvian wall carvings, Aztec idols, Polynesian tattoos, Tibetan wall hangings, etc., etc.—all grist for his mill. **PROTONG** is stuffed with scores of these weirdly beautiful, obsessive drawings.

Much of the book develops the shocking theory that mankind is haunted by The Curse of Bigfoot. Yeti, Sasquatch, Siberia's "Hairy Man of the Mountain"—different names for the same legendary creature, one that really exists, a kind of manlike ape, or apelike man; the age-old rival and enemy of the human race.

Since prehistory, the Yeti Folk have fought men for dominion over Earth. They are huge, hairy, tremendously strong and devilishly cunning. They kill and devour all humans, except for nubile females, whom they enslave as brood sows. Perhaps they are the missing link in the evolutionary chain, or the last surviving Neanderthals. They were the Troglodytes of Caesar's era, the ogres and trolls of the Dark Ages, today's Bigfoot. Now nearly extinct, the last of these living fossils have retreated into the most remote parts of the world.

The human race is unsus-

pecting host to a murderous fifth column. The enemy within is the spawn of Yeti-human crossbreedings for the last 50,000 years. Outwardly they are like other men and women, but inwardly they are ravening killer man-apes, and humans are their prey.

To quote Azukalski, "...because they are born in our own countries and communicate in our languages, they are not recognized and are taken to be Poles in Poland, Englishmen in England, Russians in Russia." From their ranks come all the sadists, sociopaths, and two-legged monsters who ever bedeviled mankind. History's worst crimes and massacres are the result of their secret war against humanity.

It's a wild concept, **THE HOWLING** with killer man-apes substituting for werewolves. SF great Jack Williamson used a similar idea to great effect way back when in his classic novel, **DARKER THAN YOU THINK**. But that was fiction. **PROTONG** argues the truth of its case with such vigor and conviction that you might just ask yourself, "What if it's true?" Then again, you may not.

If your local retailer doesn't have **BEHOLD!!! THE PROTONG** prominently displayed right up on the front racks alongside **ANIMAL MAN** and **PLANET OF THE APES**, hard as it is to conceive of such shortsightedness, write to: Archives Szukalski/P.O. Box 923308/Sylmar, CA 91392.

You can bet that buttoned-down revelator Jack Chick wouldn't stand for any high-faluting, evil-lutionary **PROTONG**-type notions. No, you can't, can't bet that is, because he



wouldn't stand for any gambling, either. To him, Darwin's **ORIGIN OF SPECIES** is the Devil's work, just another satanic snare snagging unbelieving suckers. And what would he make of **TOXIC**?

Chances are you've seen them before, at one time or another, possibly while traveling through the heartland, those amazing little comic pamphlets with matchbook-cover art illoing jaw-dropping sagas of sin and damnation, reeking of hellfire and brimstone. Their mission: expose the world-historical conspiracy of the Beast, The Great Beast 666, to corrupt mankind with sex and black magic. A conspiracy so immense that its monstrous tentacles reach into every nook and cranny of modern-day life.

Chances are you've scratched your head and ass in amazement, wondering who comes up with these booklets? Well, Jack Chick, mostly, aided and abetted by the merry crew at Chick Publications. He does comic books, too. If the Church Lady from "Saturday Night Live" were into comics, these are the comics she'd be into.

Case in point: **SPELLBOUND**, which puts forth the following proposition: "The Beatles opened up a Pandora's box with their Druid/Rock Beat in the 1960s. Then they became so popular that they were able to turn our young people on to eastern religions. The flood gates to witchcraft were opened. The U.S. will never recover...it was well planned."

Reminiscent of **HALLOWEEN III**, eh? The one that had Samhain but not the Shape. Wonder if Jack Chick looks like Dan

O'Hertihy?

SPELLBOUND's even got heroes—The Crusaders, Beast-bashing, secular humanist-scorning good guys. Picture **DRAGNET**'s Joe Friday and Bill Gannon on steroids, spouting chapter and verse from "Revelations" and "The Late, Great Planet Earth," instead of endless traffic ordinances from the L.A. penal code, and you've got the picture. They're none too zealous about bipping the ungodly, though, not even real baddies who deserve a good hard right to the jaw. I was hoping that they'd at least toss a few heretics on the barbe, but all they manage to torch is a heap of old rock and roll records, which isn't the worst idea in the world, come to think of it.

After much occult huffing and puffing, the witches unleash their Sunday punch, an attempted murder disguised as an automobile accident, a play so tired that it wouldn't even raise an eyebrow on **MANNIX**. Major disappointment. The Crusaders don't even punch out the would-be killers, they just give 'em a good shaking before a highway patrolman arrives on the scene. He's a Satanist, too, and he springs the other baddies so they get away scott free. Which goes to show that the folks at Chick Publications aren't totally out of touch with reality.

SPELLBOUND argues its case with such vigor and convictions that you might

ask yourself, "What if it's true?" Then again, you might not. Other titles in the series: **EXORCISTS**, **CHAOS**, **FOUR HORSEMEN**, and **PRIMAL MAN?** — a stinging rebuke to **BEHOLD!!! THE PROTONG**, no doubt.

Catch The Crusaders at your local religious bookstore, or write directly to: Chick Publications/P.O. Box 662/Chino, CA 91710. **CD**

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Pat O'Donnell at Metropolis Comics. Metropolis was proud to welcome President George Bush on his historic visit to Bloomfield on November 3, 1989. He never came near the shop, but if he had, Metropolis would've been proud to welcome him. History marches on at:

Metropolis Comics, 290 Glenwood Ave., Bloomfield, N.J. 07003. Phone: (201) 743-3835.





Pinker sez: "Slip me the juice, Bruce!"

SHOCK-WAVES!

TOXIC
interviews
Wes
Craven

by DAVID HENRY JACOBS

Allison (Cami Cooper), still stained from her deadly encounter with Pinker, returns from the dead to take on the electronic menace! Why does this picture remind us of *Sissy Spacek*?

Three important, wildly dissimilar filmmakers share the same unlikely background: when they were young, they were forbidden by their parents from seeing any movies but the most innocuous Disney variety. They grew up to become Steven Spielberg, *Taxi Driver* author Paul Schrader, and Wes Craven.

Wes Craven is a unique and original talent, the visionary creator of such intense classics as *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Last House on the Left*, and *The Serpent and the Rainbow*. His new hit, *Shocker*, is funny, smart, and tough; an ambitious, densely-textured film filled

with ideas and, well, shocks. And who else but Wes Craven would think of making a handheld remote control unit the ultimate weapon in a video-ized duel to the death?

Shocker opened on Friday, October 29, 1989. Wes Craven was in New York City earlier that week, making the rounds of the TV talk-show circuit and visiting friends. He was nice enough to find time to talk with us, in a wide-ranging conversation focusing on such topics as Horace Pinker's neon-bright jumpsuit; the reality of zombies; the terrifying real-life inspiration for Freddy Krueger; and other items of interest.

In person, Wes Craven is soft-spo-

All photos copyright Universal City Studios, Inc.



Wes Craven hopes Horace Pinker turns out to be as big as Freddy Krueger! Photo by Carol Westwood

Shep Gordon manages Alice Cooper and has a real good relationship with Desmond Child, who wrote all those songs. And Desmond in turn has great connections, so we got all the top heavy metal people.

Is the soundtrack album due soon?

I believe the album comes out next Monday. Album, CDs, everything. Actually, it's a very good album.

Friday you open nationwide?

Nationwide, in 1800 theaters.

What sparked the creation of Shocker villain Horace Pinker?



A horde of Horace's victim's visit Jonathan to tell him to quit dilly-dallying and get on with the monster-crushing!

You know, it was one of those ideas that came out of a conversation with a friend, and he was saying that he always loved the idea of *The Thing*, where the monster got into people's bodies and you didn't know who it was in. I was working with that basic concept, and I'd always wanted to do something that went into television, so I decided to deal with somebody who was electrically charged and was using all forms of electricity.

He began by invading bodies through the electrical parts of their nervous systems and was able to move on through the wiring system of houses, and then into the transmission beam of television and finally was infesting television itself

and coming out of TV sets to strike and then going back in. It just sort of formulated around that sort of a person with those abilities.

I said, I'll make him a television repairman. That'll give him a background in electronics. I knew I wanted him to be a very physical specimen, since he starts off being a real-life killer who batters his way into people's apartments at night...and then when the actor was found, a lot was built around his particular idiosyncrasies.

Mitch Pileggi as Pinker comes across as a very impressive looking individual.

He's very bright, and really a superb actor, so he's able to project that sense of threat and evil and a great sense of intelligence. You really believe this guy is a formidable enemy.

Pinker's loud orange jumpsuit is an effective visual.

There were two reasons for that. One is that I wanted to have a definite color and pattern to represent him no matter where or what shape he was in. The other was that it allowed us to pull matters more easily because it was so contrasty.

How do you see yourself in relation to the Empire of TV?

I see myself as the usual subversive. (laughs)

Shocker's set in Ohio. You come from Ohio. Any autobiographical elements there?

Some. (laughs) You know, I'm not going to drag my family in here, but it's based on the sorts of people I knew in Ohio.

Families, good and evil, are a major motif in your work.

I've found that it's very fertile soil for me to mine. In one shape or another, family is a very powerful thing for almost all the audience...there's always that need, that longing for or mystery of the family, and what it was, or what it could have been, or what it really was behind the scenes for the child. I think a lot of horror films are built around that structure without even realizing it. So I just sort of consciously stay in there.

You had a little go-around with the MPAA.

Their logic is that an "R" rating designates to a parent that they should feel comfortable bringing a child of any age to the film - a criteria they really only apply to horror films...*Shocker* was not hideously

ken, thoughtful, articulate. His style seems more of the academic world than of Hollywood; it's not too much of a stretch to imagine him as a member of the distinguished faculty of H.P. Lovecraft's Miskatonic University, teaching 19th Century literature (one of his passions) to eager young Herbert West wannabes. (Explanatory notes are in parenthesis.)

TOXIC: Thanks for seeing us. You schedule must be pretty crowded.

WES CRAVEN: It's been a busy few days, yes. I'm doing the "Larry King Show" tonight. I just did M-TV, I was on "The Big Picture."

That's a nice cue-in to Shocker's heavy-metal score.

That came out of my partnership with Shep Gordon and Alive Films.

WES CRAVEN



Jonathan (Peter Berg) discovers his girlfriend's corpse. Notice the Manson-like manner Pinker uses to leave his "signature" on the crime.

damaged as some films I've had, but it certainly had a few shots taken out of it, it required cuts. I really resented it...

But on a happier note, the picture still plays very strongly and it's still a very, very good picture.

Going back to *Serpent And The Rainbow*: do zombies exist?

Oh, yes. I met a zombie and several of the producers met other zombies...Basically, what it is, is a process of poisoning that makes you appear dead when you're not, and you're fully conscious while you're buried alive...That night, when your family has gone home and considered you gone forever, these people dig you up as you start to revive...

To process you further, there's a severe series of beatings, and then a second drug, datura, which is basically a severe hallucinogen, and the repeated dosages wipe up that person's volitional system. That, coupled with a deep interior belief that they are, indeed, being made into zombies - the whole personality just

collapses. It's a very real process, and very frightening.

I met a nineteen-year-old girl, by the name of Rosemary, who was in a clinic outside Port-au-Prince. She had been taken ill with a fever, died in about three days, was buried, and returned about twelve days later, wandering through a cane field. She had done something to irritate one of the village chiefs...

Apparently the system of zombification is done as some sort of a tribal judgement, and quite often is perverted into people just settling personal scores.

One of the other famous cases was a young woman who refused to marry the man that her mother and father had chosen for her, and her mother went ahead and had her zombified - an outrageous form of parental discipline.

The poor man's lobotomy, with supernatural overtones. Exactly.

Charles Bronson once said that for a change of pace he'd like to make a movie where he just stands around and drinks cocktails and doesn't shoot anybody. Any change of pace item you'd

particularly like to do?

I'd certainly love to do more comedy...I'm trying very hard to get work outside of the genre for my next film. I want to establish a basis for myself as a director, period, rather than as a horror director or a genre director. It's very important for me as I'm entering my mature years here (grins), that I do more than just horror, although I really like horror and have a lot of fun with it. But I'm feeling the need to do other things, too.

Any colleagues in the industry whose work you particularly like?

Oh, sure, a lot of them. I like Sam Raimi's work, I like Cronenberg's work a lot...Polanski's work I always watch very carefully, he has the ability to be superb. I must stay on the dark side of the moon.

What scares Wes Craven?
Taxes. Divorce lawyers.

What was the seed, the inspiration, for *Freddy Krueger*?

Freddy is a little bit based on a man that frightened me when I was a kid. I've told this story before, but basically, I was in my bed and I heard this sort of scraping footstep and went to the window, and there was a man, I guess a drunk, dressed very much like Freddy. He just stopped on the sidewalk and looked directly up in my window, into my eyes, and

**Jonathan and Allison
are not moist, they are
not damp—they are
SOAKING WET!**

Under The Stairs.

I am looking to do an out-of-the-genre film next. I'm developing a project with Larry Turman, who's the producer of *The Graduate*, based on a novel by a New York writer named Giles Blount. The book is called, *Cold Eye*, set in New York art world. It's sort of a Faustian story with a little twist of *Portrait of Dorian Gray*. If that's ready, I'll do that next; if not, there are several other things that we're talking about doing.

Lucky you signed with Alive rather than MGM. (Note*: Not long after Wes Craven inked the deal with Alive, MGM went through some changes that would not have been beneficial to *Shocker*, to say the least.)

Really. It's amazing, because there was a very real consideration that Alive's just a small company, whereas MGM actually offered us a larger budget. MGM didn't offer us the freedom Alive offered. That was the basis of our decision and it proved to be by far the best decision...

Shocker was done with complete artistic control. There was no interference whatsoever, aside from the MPAA. This is exactly the film I set out to make.

CID

Michael Murphy and Peter Berg feel the situation heat up, as Pinker hops from body to body!

really frightened me. I was a kid and I was only eight years old.

I jumped back into the shadows and waited for him to go away and didn't hear him go away. I waited and waited, as long as I thought I could, and finally I crept back and he was just staring right at me and he turned around and walked into our building, into our apartment building. I was absolutely panic-stricken, terrified. It really scared me like he would kill me. I could never go back to sleep. So I woke up my whole family and my brother went down with a baseball bat and the guy disappeared. And that was the sort of kernel of that sort of man in my

mind that there was sort of very methodical things, of deciding I would give him a certain pattern so he could be recognized, like the sweater. I gave him a hat, the kind of hat that that man wore in my memory. The claws was just thinking what the most primitive fear of a weapon would be in the mind of mankind, that it would probably be tooth or claws, so I decided to make it claws.

The opening sequence in *Nightmare*, with Freddy sharpening up his fingerknives, has

tremendous energy. The quick cuts create a sense of real unease.

That comes out of my years in the editing room. That's the way I got into the film business, by cutting trailers. That sense of rhythm is very important to film. The time that I spend in an editing room has probably more to do with the way that my films come out than anything else that I do, including directing.

It's just that that body of knowledge is absolutely invaluable, you know: How to do cuts, and how to do sound, and how to structure visually.

I believe Joe Dante started that way.

A lot of people did. Peckinpah was a really skillful trailer editor before he became a director. Hal Ashby, who did *Being There*, was a great editor. It's a really good way to break into it.

What's next?

I have a four-picture deal with Alive and Universal. There certainly will be one more that's already in the writing stages. It's called *The People*

Special thanks to Wendy Padell from MCA/UNIVERSAL for her assistance, and for arranging the Wes Craven interview.

BLOOD, BREASTS AND BEASTS!

by DAN CZIRAKY

Drive-in movie
aficionado
Joe Bob Briggs
talks about three
of TOXIC's
favorite
things.

Joseph Robert "Joe Bob" Briggs—the world's foremost authority on drive-in movies. "We're gonna fight the Tipper Gores of the world to the death." This man is Jack Valenti's worst nightmare.

Pinhead (Doug Bradley) in *Hellraiser* (New World Pictures, 1987), one of Joe Bob's favorite all-time drive-in movies.



A brain is a terrible thing to waste. A scene from Herschell Gordon Lewis' *Blood Feast* (Rhino Video, 1962).



To some people, the most horrifying thing about Joe Bob Briggs is that he ever became as successful as he is today. Of course, those are people like morality watchdogs Tipper Gore and Rev. Donald Wildmon, gay rights activists, ethnic minority groups, the National Organization for Women, and even the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. To the average person who walks into their local video emporium and heads right for the horror section, Joe Bob is a hero who fights for their rights.

Joe Bob claims to have seen about 47,000 drive-in movies, the first one being *Glant Gila Monster*, on April 27, 1958, at the Valhalla Drive-In on Federal Highway 87 between Muleshoe and Sudan, Texas. This certainly qualified him to write the weekly drive-in movie review column, "Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-In," which he began in 1982 at the urgings of *Dallas Times-Herald* columnist John Bloom. Joe Bob's first review was of the Italian cannibal film, *The Grim Reaper*, which he gave "three stars for scary and two and a half stars for story."

For the next three years, Joe Bob's popularity soared, even though he generated protests from almost every ethnic, feminist and pro-decency group in the country. In 1985, Joe Bob wrote a satire of the pompous rockers who created the famine relief song *We Are the World*. Joe Bob gathered up all the drive-in stars—Charles Bronson, Chuck Norris, Sybil Danning, and Leatherface—to record *We Are the Weird*. It brought in enough protests, led by an outraged county commissioner, to get the column cancelled and Joe Bob fired. John Bloom quit the *Times-Herald* in protest of Joe Bob's axing.

Joe Bob proved too strong for his detractors. Within 48 hours of the firing, he received more than 2,500 letters of support, and the *Times-Herald* got around 7,500 subscription cancellations. Three days after "Black Tuesday," Joe Bob had found a new syndicator, and never even missed a column. Despite the best efforts of these watchdogs, Joe Bob was back behind the wheel of his 1972 Toronado, tooling into the local drive-in for his weekly dose of exploitation. He now writes a second column, "Wisdom On Parade."

Not content with just with column, Joe Bob launched his comedy career in 1985. "An Evening with Joe Bob Briggs" premiered in Cleveland, Ohio, and has played around the

country. The show includes such original country-western songs as *You Said You Were a Virgin, But Your Baby Ain't Named Jesus*, and the dancing styles of the 2,000-pound chorus line of the Dancing Bovina Sisters. Joe Bob even released a video cassette of his concert, *Joe Bob Briggs: Dead In Concert*. This February, he kicks off another live tour.

Joe Bob's first book, *Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-In*, a collection of his earliest columns with an introduction by Stephen King, was published by Dellacorte Press in September, 1987. The next year saw the release of his autobiography, *A Guide to Western Civilization, or, My Story*. Dellacorte will print a new collection of columns, *Joe Bob Goes Back to the Drive-In*, this March.

TOXIC: What do you consider to be the first drive-in film?

Briggs: *Wife Beware*, which was the first movie shows at the first drive-in—1932 at the Drive-In Theater in Camden, New Jersey, owned by the godfather of the drive-in, our founder, Richard Hollingshead, may he rest in peace.

With Stephen King books more popular than ever and a new horror fan magazine or black-and-white horror comic book popping up almost every month, it's pretty obvious that horror is enjoying a huge following. At the same time, we've got more and more watchdog groups crying about how horror movies and comics are responsible for every crime since the Jack the Ripper killings. The MPAA is getting so strict on bloodletting that even kiddie films are getting slapped with PG-13's for showing nose-bleeds. Obviously, diehard gore-heads are heading for some kind of clash with these anti-horror groups. What's going to happen to the future of the horror movie?

We're gonna fight the Tipper Gores of the world to death. If you're a horror fan and you're not helping us out, then you're going to Clive Barker hell. I've given talks on this topic all over the country. And basically our message is this: If you go to your suburban shopping-mall eight-plex and watch *Friday the 13th, Part 9* with a group of high schoolers, you will notice that they never get confused about reality. They know that Jason is on the screen, and they are sitting in a chair. They never think



Leatherface, the star of the number one all-time drive-in movie *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (New Line Cinema, 1974)

they are on the screen. They never think Jason is sitting in the chair next to them. They never think Jason is coming down off the screen to kill them. Jason, us. Jason, us. Screen, real life. Screen, real life. They never get confused about it. They know the difference. It's only TIPPER GORE who doesn't know the difference! So get her some medical attention, but don't take it out on us.

We all know the three elements of any decent drive-in movie: Blood, Breasts and Beasts. Yet, with the MPAA and Jack Valenti mopping up all the blood before it ever gets to the screen, with starlets getting picky about taking off their clothes, and with most of the foam rubber beasts looking like



Former drive-in ripaway bra queen Sybill Danning was temporarily stripped of her title after she put on all these "extra" clothes to appear as a Nazi-from-space lizard woman in *V: The Series*.

E.T. with shingles, can we be looking at the end of the classic, five-day-shoot, \$12.98-budget, one-week-only drive-in movie?

Listen to me. It's not how much they spend on the movie that matters. It's how much they waste. *Runo 3* was a fifty-million-buck movie, but it was still a drive-in movie. As to the no-nookie clauses in actress's contracts, it's been my experience that there is always somebody, somewhere, who will pop her top on cue. I haven't noticed any dropoff in the quality of on-screen breast exposures, just a

temporary lapse in the fame of the breast exposed.

Lately, there's been a push among horror fans to name Robert "Freddy Krueger" Englund as the first modern horror star, especially now that he's done *Phantom of the Opera*. Who do you think is the best horror star of all time, and would you even consider Robert Englund in the running for that title?

Robert Englund would be among the top ten horror stars of the eighties, but he only has the one character, unlike the great horror stars of history—Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, John Carradine, Vincent Price. Also, Freddy Krueger has crossed over into the mainstream. I didn't even bother to go see the last *Nightmare*. When

I would rather be sliced up by Michael Myers than any other psychopathic mass murderer in drive-in history."

you can see Freddy Krueger toy dolls at Wal-Mart, it's time to move on to something a little scarier. Most of the great performances in horror movies are one-shot deals—Jessica Harper in *Suspiria*, Jack Nicholson in *The Shining*, Heather Lagenkamp in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Rowdy Roddy Piper in *They Live*. The true superstars of modern horror are the directors, and number one on that list has to be David Cronenberg, followed by Wes Craven, Tobe Hooper, Dario Argento, and Sam Raimi. What they all have in common is they make their kind of movie, in their way, no matter what anybody thinks or how popular they happen to be at the time they make it. Very few people know how to make horror films, because very few people know the source of fear.

You've acted in two films now, even though people have only seen you as Memphis disc jockey Dewey Phillips in *Great Balls of Fire* because your cameo death

in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2* got scissored out at the last second. Let's say you were given another chance at being sliced into little bitty pieces with a household appliance. Would you rather get done-in by Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees, Michael Myers, or Leatherface?

I would rather be sliced up by Michael Myers than any other psychopathic mass murderer in drive-in history, because Michael is more human than Freddy, Jason or Leatherface. Every once in a while, you start to understand what Michael's trying to do. And that's really scary! You're watching the movie and suddenly you say to yourself, "I'm identifying with this guy." I thought it was a great scene in *Halloween 5* where Michael Myers actually sheds a tear. It was like he was trying to tell us, "It's hell running away from Donald Pleasence your whole life." Also, Michael doesn't set out to kill everybody in the movie, like the others do. Michael is basically interested in one person. The others are just in the way. All the others have a chance to save their lives if they'll just stop thinking about themselves and notice that a psychopathic maniac is in their midst. So Michael is like this symbol of what's wrong with the eighties. He doesn't kill all those people. He's just a horrible catastrophe waiting to happen. They ignore him, and so they really kill themselves.

If we put a gun to your head, a weed-whacker to your throat, and a Black-and-Decker to your kneecaps, then told you it was absolutely necessary to the plot, would you wimp out and call for a stunt double, or give a big ol' grin for the cameras and say "Let 'em rip?"

When in doubt, hack it off.

Your credo is "The drive-in will never die," but with more and more exploitation films going the direct-to-video route, and with your column listing a new dead drive-in almost every week, how will the drive-in survive?

The drive-in is not just a place. It's a state of mind. Wherever there's a place offering movies that your mother does not want you to see, that's the drive-in. For example, Herschell Gordon Lewis, the original goremaster, will have a new life now that all of his movies are released again on video. They're just as dis-

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"When you can see Freddy Krueger toy dolls at Wal-Mart, it's time to move on to something scarier," says Joe Bob of Nightmare-man Robert England.

gusting as ever. But now, instead of driving to the worst part of town and sitting next to some guy in a raincoat in order to watch 'em, you get to drive to the mall and check 'em out of the video store while your mom is saying, "Those things will ROT YOUR BRAIN!" It's a lot more fun this way.

Not too long ago, you blasted former ripaway bra queen Sybil Danning for appearing on the now-defunct TV series, *V*. A few years roll by, and here you are hosting a weekly show on what you once called "the tiny screen indoor bullstuff cable-TV." Did you re-evaluate your position on television in general, or did you just sell out?

I've always said that I will never, ever do anything that violates my code of professional journalistic ethics. However, I will do anything for money.

Sybil Danning seems to have hung up her ripaway bra to become the female Clint Eastwood, and Linnea Quigley is now calling herself LINNEA and is producing her own movies and getting uppity about flashing her goodies. Who was the greatest B-movie queen of all time, and who will be the new queen of the screamers for the 1990's?

Mamie Van Doren was probably the greatest Queen B in history, but in the modern era I would have to vote for Barbara Crampton. She's only made a few flicks, but she's wicked, she's sexy, she's a great actress, and she has this way of making you wonder whether she wants to have sex with you or kill you—and not caring which one it is. If you could win for just two performances, I would vote for Clare Higgins for her performances in *Hellraiser* and *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*. She's the only

woman I've ever seen who loses all her skin and still looks sexy. To be a great Queen B, you have to be sexy and deadly at the same time. And, by the way, the most underrated B-movie queen is Lucinda Dickey (*Breakin'*, *Revenge of the Ninja*, *Cheerleader Camp*), who just hasn't found the perfect movie yet to show off her enormous talents.

Your first collection of columns featured such career highlights as your very first review, the list of the 27 best drive-in movies of all time for the First Drive-In Movie Festival and Custom Car Rally, your trips to the Cannes Film Festival in your 1972 Toronado, and, of course, the *We Are the Weird* parody. What treats can we look forward to in the new collection?

Joe Bob Goes Back to the Drive-In is perhaps one of the most significant collections of serious writing in the last two centuries. Scholars will be studying this book well past the year 3000. It has an introduction by Wayne Newton. And I ask you, have you ever ready any book with an introduction by Wayne Newton?

About two years ago, you predicted a comeback for martial arts films after viewing Sho Kosugi's *Pray For Death* at Cannes. While that film didn't quite live up to your expectations due to major cuts in graphic violence to avoid an "X" rating, it seems that chopsocky did get a boost from such Jean Claude Van Damme films as *Bloodsport* and *Kickboxer*. Do you think these films will ever enjoy the kind of popularity they did back in the days of Bruce Lee?

That's right. *Bloodsport* and *Kickboxer* are the best things to happen to kung fu in years. Sho Kosugi's career never quite lived up to its promise. I don't

know what happened after *Pray For Death*, except if you've been watching his movies, you know that he lost his English. In *Pray For Death*, he spoke great English. But I just watched a movie a few months ago where he keeps talking about "I hate boocratic boo-st." Over and over he says this. He's supposed to be a DEA agent from Arizona. It's not working for Sho. And it's also not working for Dolph Lundgren. One of the best drive-in movies of '89 was *Red Scorpion*, but the true hard-core martial arts fans hated Dolph Lundgren. They thought he was a sissy. The man's got muscles bigger than Arnold the Barbarian's, and they still thought he was a sissy! Go figure. So Jean Claude Van Damme is it. Fortunately, they only let him say about 15 words per movie. He needs to take some drugs to deepen his voice, and then he won't have to do the splits 200 times per movie to keep everybody's attention. And, of course, we can't forget Chuck Norris. He was really the first white guy to do kung fu on the big screen after Bruce Lee. He can still chop a little socky, but he's too old for the really athletic stuff like Van Damme does. (Sorry, Chuck, please don't hurt me if you're reading this.)

At this point in time, what are the top ten drive-in horror movies of all time?

The list would have to include *Saw* (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), of course. The original *Night of the Living Dead* is the only one from the pre-1970's I'd put on the list. A classic horror film has to be completely original. It has things in it you've never seen before. And, of course, anybody can die at any moment, the innocent suffer, blood spurts, heads roll. Cronenberg's *The Fly*, *The Shining*, *Evil Dead*, *Hellraiser*, *Basket Case*. Does *Terminator* count as a horror film? *Suspiria*. How many is that? For historical reasons, I guess you'd have to put *Blood Feast* on there. Maybe *The Exorcist* for the same reason. Actually, I'm compiling a summary of the greatest horror films, might do a book on it, so maybe I shouldn't give myself away. After all, I'm not getting a nickel for this, am I? Or am I? Do you guys pay for this? You should, you know...

To write to Joe Bob Briggs and tell him he's obnoxious, or to find out when he's coming to your town on his live show tour, or to get his *We Are the Weird* newsletter, write Joe Bob Briggs, P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

CTO

This issue: King Diamond, Stage Dolls, Skinny Puppy, plus other sounds designed to make yer ears bleed!

NORWEGIAN NOISE

Unlike most Norwegian metal bands, **Stage Dolls** has always written their songs in English, a move that should prove profitable as their first U.S. release, *Stage Dolls* (Chrysalis), hits the record stores. "We grew up listening to music from America," explains Torstein Flakne, the trio's singer/guitarist/songwriter. "So naturally that's reflected in the music we make."

The new album contains nine powerful cuts, chosen from over 50 recent compositions. "We were very careful," says Torstein. "We wanted to make a record that would be strong all the way through, instead of just two or three good songs and a lot of junk."

The band (consisting of Torstein, bassist Terje Storli, and drummer Steinar Krokstad) has been together since 1983, and have been charting records in Europe since 1985.

Their music manages the tough combination of power and beauty. The best cuts on the disc are "Still in Love," "Wings of Steel" and "Love Cries." "Love Cries" has been chosen to be the first single off the LP.

Now the band is starting their first U.S. tour to coincide with the release of the record. "The best way for us to conquer America is to tour," says Torstein. "That's the way we've always built our audience. We've been together for six years now, and we're getting stronger all the time."

MONARCH OF THE MACABRE

Who's the most TOXIC act out there today? It has to be **King Diamond**, a ghoulish metal performer who's as determined to scare the shit out of his audiences as he is to make good music.

Like, the guy's *make stand* is made out of two human bones!

Diamond, who's from Denmark, makes concept albums—that is, records that tell a story—and his live performances are even sicker than those of the early Alice Cooper.

His most recent release, *Conspiracy* (Roadracer Records), tells the story of a

man who is murdered but vows to return from the grave to seek revenge on his killers.

His most recent video, made in black and white, intercuts performance footage taped in a graveyard, with snippets from B&W horror films—and the thing is pieced together so seamlessly that it's hard to tell where one stops and the other begins.

The King's backup band consists of guitarists Andy LaRoque and Pete Blakk, drummer Mickey Dee and bassist Hal Patino. The sound blends gut-churning metal

King Diamond. His sounds blends gut-churning metal riffs with wounded animal howls.





Stage dolls are (left to right) Terje Storli, Torstein Flakne and Steinar Krokstad. "The best way for us to conquer America is to tour."

the cops discovered the dog was fake, they continued to hassle the band, who hassled back. Result: \$200 fines for all and a night in the slammer.



Alice Cooper (right) fries Megadeth's Dave Mustaine at ARK/Alive Records' Shocktail Party. Photo by Lester Cohen.

riffs with wounded animal howls, while the lyrics seem hellbent on pissing off all those Moms and Dads out there whose precious babies are carving "666" into their foreheads!

SHOCKTAIL PARTY

At a recent party in Los Angeles, thrown by SBK/Alive Records to celebrate the release of SBK's all-metal soundtrack for *Shocker*, the sparks were really flying!

A mock electric chair was set up and the inventor of horror rock, **Alice Cooper**, threw the switch to "electrocute" Megadeth's **Dave Mustaine**.

The party, held at Hollywood Live, was attended by 1000 metal-

heads. For more on the film, see TOXIC's interview with director Wes Craven elsewhere in this issue.

PUPPIES BEHIND BARS

The members of the band *Skinny Puppy* were busted recently because of the "offensive nature" of their live show. The show, which accompanies their most recent album *Vivisection* (Capitol Records), is a protest against animal cruelty and contains film footage of grossly inhumane scientific experiments. During the performance, lead singer *Ogre* transforms from an average man into a vivisectionist and then into the tortured test subject. During the show, *Ogre* "operates" on a stuffed dog. Apparently an audience member in Cincinnati thought the dog was real and called the cops. When

CAUGHT LIVE

The late sixties and early seventies were a time of musical experimentation and rule-breaking. The previously holy three-minute song went out the window. Artists no longer cared if their songs fit between commercials on an AM radio station. The new phenom, FM, with its looser programming formats, offered airplay to songs that lasted up to 20 minutes. Live concerts became real shows, rather than excuses for teenyboppers to clear out their lungs. For the first time since the invention of rock and roll, it really mattered if a band had chops. The rock drum solo was created—which only goes to show that not all of the experimentation worked out.

Now Warner Special Products has come out with a cassette tape that is a tribute to those days, and we're pleased to report that there isn't a single drum solo

on it. The tape is from the "Baby Boomer Classics" series and is called *Live—Volume 1*. It features, with all of the brilliances and excesses intact, live performances from some of the leading groups of the era.

Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Green River" starts off side one, followed up by The Grateful Dead's "Sugar Magnolia." Joe Cocker's version of "Cry Me a River" comes next (recorded from the "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" tour with Leon Russell on piano), and Humble Pie finishes off the side with "I Don't Need No Doctor," recorded at New York's Fillmore East. Humble Pie, some of you might not recall, was Peter Frampton's original band, before he became idol to the bubblegum snappers and could still kick ass.

Side two starts off with a raunchy "Johnny B. Goode" by Johnny Winter. This is followed by the clean version of "Kick Out The Jams" by the MC5. The dirty version, available still on MC5's greatest hits albums, is not only socially unacceptable but musically superior to the one offered here. Lou Reed does "White Light/White Heat," the drug opus he originally recorded with the Velvet Underground. The album concludes with Ten Years After's "I'm Going Home" (not the Woodstock version). You can practically feel lead guitarist Alvin Lee getting blisters on his fingers.

Now that the deep-pocket people have once again got a firm control of the music industry, and we've returned to the three minute single that fits between commercials, it is both joyful and poignant to recall the days when musical performers forgot the glitz and worked on the sound. **CTD**

A Rastafarian member
of the *Nightbreed*
shakes out his fleshy
dreadlocks.

Clive Barker's latest movie *Nightbreed* is about Boone (played by Craig Sheffer), a man (falsely) accused of being a psycho killer who, while fleeing from both the cops and the real killer, descends into the earth and discovers an underground city filled with benevolent shape-changing creatures. The movie was made on a \$10 million budget by Morgan Creek Productions. Also starring in the picture are Anne Bobby, as Boone's girlfriend who is also searching for him, Charles Hall (best known for his role as Renko on *Hill Street Blues*), Hugh Quarshie, Doug (Pinhead) Bradley, and horror-director extraordinaire David Cronenberg. TOXIC recently spoke to Barker via telephone from his Los Angeles office about the new film and other things.

TOXIC: Where did you get the idea for the underground city of Midian?

Barker: There is a long tradition of underground adventures, going all the way back to the Greek Heroes. There's a classic convention of the

What's better than
soap on a rope? Head
on a stick!

THE INVENTOR OF TECHNO-DANTE

Clive Barker talks about *Nightbreed*
and the imagery of the classic descent.

CLIVE BARKER



"Please don't scream. I may have a lousy haircut, but I'm basically a nice guy."

The thing about psycho killers is, their bark is just as rough as their bite!



quest into dark places—hell even. Dante goes down into hell. So for me, I like the imagery of the descent. The idea for the city itself came out of a desire on my part to find a place for my monsters to live.

In what ways does *Nightbreed* differ from *Cabal*? (Barker's book upon which the film is based)?

It is much more specific about the creatures. The book is very impressionistic, merely postulates about the creatures. The film is more about the monsters, whereas the book is about the human beings—and I

think you can tell that even from the difference in the titles.

Was it your idea to change the title from *Cabal* to *Nightbreed*? Uh-huh. I love monsters, monster make-up and the like, so that would be better for the film.

There are over 130 different creatures in *Nightbreed*. Where did you come up with the idea for so many?


Well, I took a lot of drugs and...no, no, no, just joking. A lot of the credit has to go to Bob Keen or Bob Keen's Image Animation who built the monsters. The challenge was that these monsters are supposed to be good guys. The monsters couldn't be chilly and remote like the Cerebrates in *Hellraiser*. They had to be traditional, yet a half twist on tradition. It took a lot of brainstorming, but I think we've achieved that. We've got monsters who change shapes. We've got children who can transform themselves into animals. We've got freaks, and all kinds of shit. (Laughs.)

A lot of your work tends to have religious undertones. What was your religious upbringing, and how did that affect your work?

Maybe, it's the fact that I didn't have any religious upbringing. The family joke is that they took me to church to be baptized, the water boiled, and I never went back again. Yet, you are exactly right. There is large, sweep-

"Please, God, just give me one tube of Clearasil and I'll never ask for anything again!"





ing religious imagery in my stuff. And that's true of a lot of horror. One of the principal components of this sort of material is the conflict between the holy and the unholy, the sacred and the profane. That kind of imagery wanders through the classics like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. These are books that deal very much with the holy and the unholy, with what is God's work and what is the Devil's work. I think it's always been there in the genre. Only lately has this stopped being true—because people don't believe in these religious icons anymore. Now we have a lot of movies where the vampire can reach out and grab the cross and not be burned by it. This was true in *Fright Night*. A movie based on one of my stories, *Rawhead Rex*, has a priest devoured by a creature who is completely unimpressed by the Christian iconography. I think that reflects a new audience cynicism concerning religious matters. The days are gone when the Van Helsing character can pull out some holy water or a crucifix and the force of evil will automatically retreat. To get back to your question, the religion in my work is inherent in the genre. Now the trick is to make the religious aspects fresh for an audience that is often reluctant to deal with it. In *Hellraiser*, for example, the Cenobites form a weird sort of priesthood. At least, that's how they come across. They have their rituals, they have their rites, they have their bag of ticks. Pinhead comes across like the High Priest of Pain. Theirs is a perverse religion, but nonetheless a religion.

You said in a recent interview that you feel more possessive about the characters in *Night-*

***breed* than about those in *Hellraiser*. Why is that?**

Well, for one thing, I sold the rights to *Hellraiser* so that others can now do with those characters what they will. I felt like there wasn't anything more I could do with those characters without diluting them. (Of course, I could be wrong. Now that the new *Hellraiser* comic book is coming out, I see that they are using the Cenobites in a lot of different contexts. There is a Western story, a modern story, a Gothic story, and so on.) In *Nightbreed* there are many monsters that I feel a lot more sympathetic toward. I feel that, with these new creatures, there is a lot more to examine and explore—so I want to hang on to them.

How did David Cronenberg come to be cast in *Nightbreed* and what was it like directing a director?

It was a joy. He is a wonderful gentleman. The only problem I had was with directing an idol of mine. I tried to be responsive to him, and I paid a lot of attention to his input. He was responsive to me also, and he gave me everything I asked of him. He gave a chilling, detached performance.

That's not a surprise...

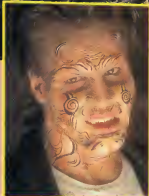
No. His work is chilling and detached—but in real life he's a very passionate man, quite in contrast to what you might expect. His performance is a great contrast to the raging, screaming lunatic killer that we've come to expect in horror films. It worked real well.

Who's idea was it to put him in the film?

It was mine. I asked him, he said yes, and here we are a year later—still talking to each other.

Don't let just anybody trim your sideburns.

I think sometimes we get so familiar with the Disney animated movies that we forget how strong the element of fear is in them."



"Hey baby, how 'bout a kiss right on the LIPS!"

How does the creative process for you differ from when you are writing to when you are directing?

The thing about writing is that it is so solitary. It can be a lonely business—but that, in a way, is part of the joy of it. If you are on a roll, there's nothing more pleasurable than setting aside a morning and writing, knowing that no one is going to interrupt you and take you out of your inner world. The converse of that is when you are not on a roll, you can lock yourself in a room and stare at a piece of blank paper for twelve hours. In movies, you've got to do it and you've got to do it now. The money people are always on your back making sure that you deliver—so the pressure is up all the time. *Nightbreed* is only the second film I have directed, so I'm only just not a virgin, but it's a highly pressured and stressful job.

How did you move to being a movie director come about?

Well, I wasn't satisfied with the movies that were being made of my stories. I figured there were a couple

The sheriff gets croaked.

of ways I could deal with this. I could take the money and run, and not even bother to see the pictures. Or I could go to the pictures and whine and bitch a lot—or I could try making the movies myself.

You made a courageous decision...

Youth has it's folly.

Did *Hellraiser* have trouble with the MPAA?

Some. *Hellraiser II* had more. I anticipate some problems with *Nightbreed*. They are getting tougher.

What is your opinion of that organization?

Well, I think they are doing the job they are getting paid to do. I just don't think it's a job they should have to do. The problem is that films are so expensive to make that investors are concerned about getting their money back. Our film cost \$10 million to make, and that's only about half of what the average film costs. If you can't get advertising or distribution for an X-rated picture, then you have to make cuts until you get an R.

It seems unfair to lump *Hellraiser* with *Deep Throat II*...

I couldn't agree with you more. It's nonsense. They say it's not censorship, but if you get an X rating and no one will show the picture, it is by implication censorship.

Who are your literary and cinematic heroes?

Jean Cocteau, James Whale, Alfred Hitchcock, Brian DePalma, Dario Argento. Argento isn't really known here, although I hear *Suspiria* is com-

ing out...In the literary world, I have been influenced by Edgar Allan Poe, Ray Bradbury. Of the non-genre stuff that has influenced me, I'd have to include *Peter Pan*. I love *The Wizard of Oz*. Disney cartoons have influenced me greatly. They contain some of the most wildly imaginative stuff...

And often quite frightening...

Extremely frightening. I think sometimes we get so familiar with the Disney animated movies that we forget how strong the element of fear is in them.

What's the one movie you wish you could have written or directed?

Bride of Frankenstein.

What frightens you more than anything?

Failure.

You have a book of your art work coming out. Tell us about that?

Eclipse Books has decided to gather together several hundred of my drawings and it's going to come out soon in a book called *Clive Barker—Illustrator*.

Did you always want to be a writer?

Well, I always wanted to be a professional imaginer—although I wasn't sure as a child how that was going to manifest itself.

Maybe you still aren't...

That's true. Whether it's writing or drawing or working in the theater or making movies, I am doing what I want to do. Imagining things, and then finding ways to put it in front of people. I deal with things that most people don't want to deal with, so the challenge is to make it palatable. You have to find a balance.

How old were you when you sold your first piece of imagination?

Well, I worked in the theater through my twenties. I sold my first piece of writing when I was 31. I was a late starter.

How old are you now?

Thirty-seven—so I made up for it. I was never concerned with what would sell or how well something would sell. I was always concerned with how well I was expressing my imagination. My favorite review of *Hellraiser* said, "The movie was great, and it should give people lots of ideas for decorating their dungeons."

GALLERY OF NIGHTBREED

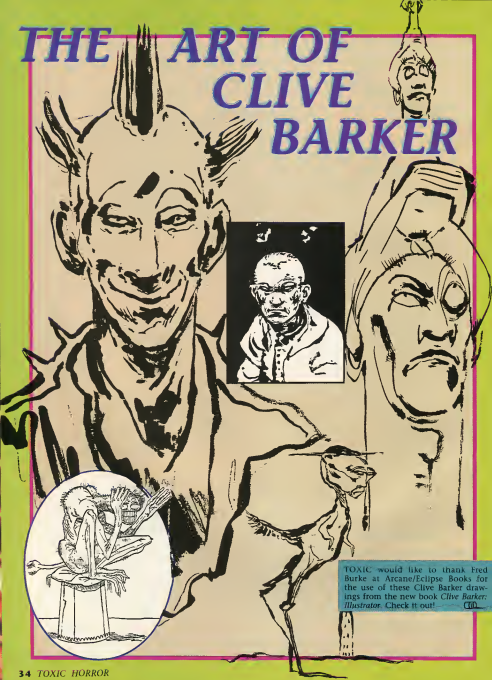







The cage feast in *Nightbreed*
(Twentieth Century Film Corp.)
Photo by Murray Close.

THE ART OF CLIVE BARKER



TOXIC would like to thank Fred Burke at Arcane/Eclipse Books for the use of these Clive Barker drawings from the new book *Clive Barker: Illustrator*. Check it out! 

This issue: Pranks, human piercing, The Phantom of the Movies, plus more bizarre and abrasive literature!

MONDO BIZARRO

"The story must be told, the story must be told!"
—Narrator (Bela Lugosi) in *Gen* or *Glenda*

Remember "Little Billy" from *Lost in Space*? Once I got his private phone number. One of my favorite episodes in *Twilight Zone* is when he plays the little kid who has complete control of the town—if he doesn't like something, he'll make it disappear. He'd make a little animal, and when he got tired of it he'd say, "You be dead! You're dead!" We beat his voice saying that, and late one night we called and played it over the phone to him. I don't know how he felt—waking up out of a sound sleep to hear his childhood voice saying to him, "You be dead! You're dead!"

—from an interview with Boyd Rice in *Pronks*.

Re/Search Publications' *Pronks* is devoted to the age-old performance art-form known in Poe's day as "diddling," and variously known today as practical joking, pranking, goofing, foxing, hoaxing, putting on, pulling a fast one, giving the old hotfoot to, etc., etc.

Among the laugh-making (for the perpetrators), goat-getting (of the victims) gags documented herein are the transformation of a billboard booze ad's celebrity spokesman Telly Savalas into a fanged monster, the founding of a society to clothe naked animals, and the World Sex Olympics—by the same man; eco-activists spiking tall timber in the

Pacific Northwest to sabotage the lumber industry's tree-killing chainsaw massacres; and hundreds of English soccer rowdies donning Donald Duck masks before the start of a stadium punch-up that caused scores of casualties.

But those are some of the best yocks, which come pretty few and far between. Compared to world-class jokers like Khomeini, Khadafi, Noriega, even Jim Bakker, too much of *Pronks* suffers from triviality. It's the bohemian version of locker room and frat-house humor. A bias toward anarcho-left avant-gardists puts the spotlight on familiar bores like Dead Kennedy's front man Jello Biafra, the late unlamented Abbie Hoffman, and mouthy gnome Paul Krassner, while ignoring the ground-breaking working done in the field by right-wing political pranksters Ollie North, G. Gordon Liddy, Richard "Tricky Dick" Nixon, and J. Edgar Hoover.

Ultimately, nothing in *Pronks* approaches the audacity of this delicious real-life gag, which appeared in the papers about a year or so ago:

A Peruvian police psychiatrist, listening to the confessions of a serial killer in his jail cell, become so horrified by the lovingly detailed catalogue of horrors that he strangled the prisoner to death before startled guards could intervene. Imagine the look on the killer's face when the crime doctor wrapped hands around his neck to squeeze the life out of him—!!! A classic case of "the biter bit."

The mind-boggling *Modern Primitives* examines those seekers

among us "who follow their secret yearnings to extremity," namely, the desire for bodily ornamentation and decoration by tattoos, scarification, and piercing. The ultimate fashion statement, be it the traditional "Mother" tattooed over one's heart, or the insertion of a dozen steel skewers through the chest muscles, (not to mention even more delicate anatomical zones).

A wide-ranging anthology of essays, interviews, drawings, and incredible photographs, *Modern Primitives* derives from a see-it-now shockumentary tradition which includes such purveyors of exotica as *National Geographic* magazine, *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*, the cycle of *Mondo Cane* movies, *Faces of Death*, Gerald's high-rated Satanist TV special, and P.T. Barnum. Definitely NOT for the squeamish, it makes *FREAKARDS* look like Hallmark greeting cards.

Here are masochists, mystics, exhibitionists, kooks, and vision questers. Tattoo artists and their human canvases, some of the most astounding illustrated men and women ever; fakirs on their beds of nails; Mayan blood-letting rituals; America's underground network of piercing fans; these are only a few of the topics covered in this educational, informative volume. And as for the amateur surgeon who bisected his penis for decorative/artistic purposes—ouch!

Modern Primitives and *Pronks* are two of many " quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore" from San Francisco-based *Re/Search Publications*. *Re/Search* is best known to genre fans for last year's *Incredibly Strange Films*, an omnibus com-





The Phantom says that the original *Halloween* (1978, Media Home Entertainment, directed by John Carpenter) "deserves its status as a terror trailblazer."

perback writer Charles Willeford's *Wild Wives* trilogy. Also promised is a forthcoming *Incredibly Strange Films, Vol II*, and other intriguing material.

Write or call: RE/SEARCH Publications/20 Romero St., Suite B/San Francisco, CA 94133/415-362-1465. Tell 'em TOXIC sent you!

—DHJ

PHANTOM PHUN!

Any book that's dedicated to the late John Carradine can't be all bad, but this is faint praise for *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide* (Dell Publishing, 608 pages), quite simply the best book of its kind to be found on the racks and, at \$12.95, the bargain of the decade. "Watch what you want, when you want," is the Phantom's vid credo, and to this end, his comprehensive book will enable videophiles to do just that.

Beginning in 1984, the man known only as Phantom of the Movies began writing an irreverent, tongue-in-cheek weekly column in the *New York Daily News*, cover-

ing the flicks the highbrow critics wouldn't touch—namely horror, action-adventure, and other assorted off-beat B-movie fare. (His true identity is unknown to all but his wife, his editors, his publicist, and his wife.) Now, some five years later, his column has grown so much in popularity (it now appears twice weekly, in addition to a review of one genre entry in the *News'* Sunday edition), the Phantom receives more Phant mail than any other *News* columnist.

Consisting of over 40,000 titles currently available on video cassette, *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide* features the most complete collection to date of low-budget genre flicks and skillfully covers all the bases in the process. The categories include "A Is for Action" (action-adventure); "The Fright Stuff: Terror on Tape" (horror/splatter); "Martians, Mutants, & Mind-Melds From Hell" (Sci-Fi & fantasy); "Killer Thrillers" (mystery & suspense); "Funny Business" (current, cult, and classic comedy); "Off-Off Hollywood" (camp classics and cinematic oddities such as the efforts of Ed Wood, Jr. and T.V. Mikels); "That's Exploitation": *Vintage Sleaze on Video*; "Cinema Veritastless" (which consists of "Shockumentaries, mondo movies, and propaganda pics); and selected reviews of classic and obscure Westerns, rock'n'roll flicks, preview trailer tapes, cult TV favorites, and even a listing of mail-order and specialty video outfits. Also featured are affectionate profiles of Ed Wood, Jr. (related by none other than Alex Gordon), Ray Dennis Steckler, Russ Meyer, Wes Craven, Stuart Gordon, Val Lewton, Jack Sholder, George Romero, John Waters, and T.V. Mikels, in addition to "What Never Happened To..." profiles of Candace (Carnival of Souls)

Hilligoss, *Godzilla* ("In *Godzilla We Trust*"), and Arch Hall, Jr.

The Phantom's reviews are entertaining, sometimes downright hilarious, and, more important, 99% on target. He weeds out all of the numerous video stinkeroos, and recommends the cream of the video crop, enabling the budding videophile to steer clear of the rock-bottom, no-budget efforts flooding the shelves. Video labels are also included with each and every entry, making the book even more invaluable.

If you haven't yet picked up on *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide*, waste not another minute. Besides being the best investment you'll be likely to make, it's also one hell of a fun read and will open the door to a veritable treasure trove of genre flicks currently available on tape.

— Gary Goldstein

GRUESOME GRIDIRON

The hero of *Creature* by John Saul (Bantam Books, 329 pages, \$12.95) is Mark Tanner, a 16-year-old "A" student who's short and frail as a result of Rheumatic fever nine years before. He loves animals and is considering a career as a vet. Mark's father, Blake, works for the San Jose branch of TarrenTech. He invented the company's slogan, "If it's high-tech, it's TarrenTech." And high-tech it is. TarrenTech started as a computer software firm, but grew into a megaconglomerate, as companies tend to do these days. Now TarrenTech's into television, NASA, consumer goods, airlines, hospitals and pharmaceuticals.

As the book begins, Blake Tanner and his family are transferred to the Research and Development facility in Silverdale, Colorado, where

TarrenTech has rebuilt the entire town. It's a perfect town, as Mark's mother observes early on:

"Although she couldn't argue that the town wasn't beautiful, perfectly planned, ad perfectly built, there was still something wrong.

"And that, she suddenly realized, was it. It was too perfect, all of it. The homes, the shops, the schools, even the food in the market. Too perfect."

All the boys are on the football team, and the football team never loses. All the girls seem to be cheerleaders, and the whole town revolves around the Sports medical facility, aptly called, Rocky Mountain High, where a series of secret experiments are being performed on the boys in the football team. Ninety-eight pound weaklings are transformed into 175-pound musclemen through the use of synthetic hormone injections and computer programmed conditioning. The trouble is, some of the boys grow too rapidly.

One such boy is Jeff LaConnor, who smashes a boy from the opposing team to death during a game. This act of cruelty horrifies his girlfriend, who is now attracted to Mark for his tender qualities, thus giving Jeff the cold shoulder. Before too long, Jeff attacks Mark and nearly kills him with his superhuman strength. By the time the police find him, Jeff has mutated into something huge and muscular, with simian brow and strange eyes that are sensitive to light. He has claws where his fingernails used to be. TarrenTech hides him in the Sports facility, keeping the whole thing out of the papers and out of mind.

In the meantime, Mark is moved to the facility from the hospital at his fathers' urging and against his mothers' will. There Mark recovers miraculously, and puts on a few pounds of muscle as

well. Suddenly Mark hates animals and homework, and he decides he wants to try out for the football team.

Now the story centers on the two mothers, and their attempts to unravel the mystery of the Sports Center. Of course, the whole town thinks they are crazy, and the fathers are so excited about their sons' rapid growth that they collude with TarrenTech in trying to shut those women up. After all, TarrenTech has a big secret to protect. A sympathetic doctor unwittingly discovers the hormone mixture, and joins forces with Mark's mother to expose the hideous experiments. Needless to say, TarrenTech takes care of him.

The twilight-zone quality John Saul creates in this novel is truly hair-raising. We won't reveal the ending, but suffice it to say there is plenty of bone-crunching fun, and this is what we've come to expect from Saul, whose earlier novel, *The Unwanted*, was a screamer.

—Mitch Highfill

NO REFUGE FOR THE BORED

The *Refuge* (Chaz Brenchley; St. Martin's Press, 1989, 367 pages, \$18.95) may rate well as a popular novel of psychology, but not as a thriller, the yawn count is too high. The *Refuge* is a London hideout for young runaways, filled with a cast of all too familiar characters: The middle-aged schoolmarm who plays the disciplinarian role (not to worry, she exits after an auto accident early on); the lenient guy who takes over after the schoolmarm exits, Mark is himself a recovered psycho; the wealthy old doctor who foots the bills and enforces the secrecy that is necessary to protect the runaways; the young male prostitute with AIDS;

the paranoid young girl who was abused by her parents; the punky bad girl with a funny haircut; the upper-class girl gone pregnant, on the run from her abortionist father; the greedy young Pakistani girl who deals cocaine for extra cash; and the young black assistant with a heart of gold.

The fun starts when the sister of a psycho-rapist-killer shows up at the refuge, on the run from her crazy brother, Sebastian. While following her trail, Sebastian finds Jenny, an old friend of the family. He thought his sister might be hiding with her. When he finds no trace of his sister, he cuts Jenny open and burns down the apartment building. Unfortunately, there is too little fun, and precious little suspense.

The character development is certainly the high point of *The Refuge*, and one character is particularly well developed; Alex, the journalist who enters the Refuge disguised as a runaway. Her original intention is to expose and discredit the Refuge, but she quickly becomes sympathetic to the runaways and their keepers. She falls in love with Mark, who now runs the place, and what could have been a good source of suspense fades into a corny love affair.

Brenchley sets up several terrifying possibilities, and he repeatedly fails to carry them out. For example, why doesn't the ex-psycho (Mark) in charge have a relapse? What about the mysterious old doctor—why is he so interested in young runaways? Brenchley seems to have no appetite for the kind of suspense that makes such novels tick.

So the novel crawls slowly to a tepid climax, with the press descending on the scene in slow motion, while gangsters hunt down the Pakistani teen on a drug deal gone sour. The thugs plan to torture the girl with a giant

pair of pliers (probably wirecutters), but they find the pregnant girl instead. She pulls a knife out from under her pillow and kills one of them. The other thug escapes before the household comes to rescue her. The Pakistani girl climbs out on the fire escape where Sebastian is waiting. He drives a chisel into her heart.

In stories like this, the only possible plot could be a heavy ending. Alas, Brenchley couldn't resist the happy ending. Sebastian is finished after two failed attempts on his sister's life, and the Refuge is moved to a new secret location.

The *Kirkus* review says, "the book is more novelistic than mysterious," and we couldn't agree more.

—Mitch Highfill

The Phantom says Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984, Media Home Entertainment) "delivers the chills... (but is) less adept at crafting credible dialogue."



by GARY GOLDSTEIN

WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF FREAKS!



Belial says "cheese" for the paparazzi.

TOXIC visits the set of *Basket Case II*.

This is Frank's classical family movie, Norman Rockwell on acid," says producer Edgar levins, about *Basket Case II*. "It's as wholesome as you can get in that disturbing arena we call Frank Henenlotter's domain."

levins should know. He's been with Frank Henenlotter since the beginning, back in 1982 for the filming of *Basket Case* when there wasn't enough money to pay for developing one day's dailies and buying film for the next day's shoot. Now levins is producing both *Basket Case II* and Henenlotter's other big project, *Frankenhooker*. "These are the biggest films I've ever done," levins says proudly, and guarantees that "the disturbing images of Frank's story will be the best ever seen. We do

things you just shouldn't do. There's something disturbing about (both movies). That's what is so good about them: they make you think!"

Despite this, *Basket Case II*, levins says, will not be "as splattery" as *Basket Case I* "because times have changed, but Frank's energy and vision as a filmmaker—plus the larger budget—will ensure that *Basket Case II* will be head and shoulders above the original."

levins is truly excited about both movies. In a skillfully assembled saloon set that uncannily resembles many a Times Square dive, levins is proud of the results achieved by Henenlotter and Company on their limited under-a-million budget, especially "the sheer volume of special effects." Next door, we hear the

blood-freezing screams of an actress as filming continues. Its nearly 7 P.M., and the set still hums with activity. In the front office, production aides hastily assemble copies of the next day's shooting script. An actor wearing a hideous mask of a bloodied, mutilated face comes in to make a phone call.

All of this is a far cry from the lean days of *Basket Case*, when levins was often called upon by Henenlotter to double as an actor in small roles, a function no longer necessary; all of *Basket Case II*'s thespians are members of the Screen Actor's Guild. "I'd rather let professional actors have their chance," he says.

Meanwhile, as art director Dan Ovellete pretends to jam his left eye into a coat rack, levins says of *Frankenhooker*, "We portray New York City in a light it should be portrayed in! (Frank) confirms every worst fear we have about New



**Come on in!
The heer's in the
fridge!**

All photos copyright SGE.



The freaks in *Basket Case II* aren't just ugly—they're DEADLY!

Caesarian hirth ain't what it's cracked up to be!

York—the New York City you don't see on TV!"

Basket Case, chronicled the adventures of Duane Bradley (Kevin Van Hentenryck), who carried around his grossly mutated Siamese twin in a basket and terrorized Times Square lowlifes. Shot on a budget of \$35,000 over a one-year period, *Basket Case*, though receiving only a small theatrical run (mostly midnight shows), earned much critical praise for Henenlotter and, through some video, attracted a huge following.

Its success enabled Henenlotter and levin to unleash 1988's shock-fest *Brain Damage*, wherein brain-sucking parasite *Aylmer* gets loose from his middle-aged keepers and gloms onto young Rick Herbst.

Aylmer injects a euphoria-producing, hallucinogenic drug into his unwitting human host in exchange for human brains. The success of *Brain Damage* catapulted Henenlotter into the ranks of bankable horror auteur, paving the way for both *Frankenhooker* and *Basket Case II*.

The six-year gap between movies, levin explains, resulted from too many offers for a *Basket Case* sequel, which Henenlotter was reluctant to do until the time was just right. Other offers did come along, but they were, in levin's words, "non-offers. (This) work is too hard if you don't love it." Though he worked originally as a clinical director for an upstate New York health center, levin was eventually forced to choose between going for his doctorate or pursuing the career he really wanted: movies. In Henenlotter levin saw someone "who could cover all the bases: writer, director, editor." With levin's fundraising experience, a partnership was inevitable.

Bankrolling both *Frankenhooker* and *Basket Case II* is Shapiro-Glickenhau Entertainment, the people who gave us *The Exterminator*, *Maniac Cop* and 1988's *Shakedown*, with Peter (*RoboCop*) Weller. Henenlotter's new efforts are being shot back-to-back in the far-flung recesses of New York City's Pier 40,



We doubt if the original Dr. Frankenstein had this kind of aesthetic eye.



More than a dozen genuinely disturbing prosthetic creature masks will be utilized. Tumor Face. Froggy. Nosy—who sports 25 honkers.

just south of Greenwich Village. The shooting schedule for each is six weeks.

Frankenhooker, which was shot first, tells the story of a medical school dropout (James Lorinz), who haunts the sleazy cathouses of Times

Square in an effort to find a suitable body for his recently decapitated girlfriend. Needless to say, Henenlotter and co-scripter Robert Martin are taking some liberties

with Mary Shelley's original novel. (But then, who hasn't?)

Basket Case II: House of Freaks, picks up where *Basket Case* left off, with Duane Bradley (Van Hentenryck, reprising his role) and his trouble-making Siamese twin being taken in by kindly Granny Ruth (Annie Ross), who operates a sort of halfway house for freaks in Staten Island. Making things difficult are nosy Marcie Elliot, a reporter for the *National Enquirer*-like sleazy tabloid, *Judge & Jury*, and her editor, played by veteran thesp Jason Evers (who as Herb Evers starred in the 1959 camp classic, *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, one of Henenlotter's faves. He owns two copies of the video, one cut, the other the complete version.) "I had to ask his (Evers') permission to rip his face off (for the movie)," levins says gleefully. "He said he'd be delighted." Like Henenlotter, levins is excited at the prospect of working with Jason Evers. "It's an opportunity to work with people whose performances you loved," he claims. Also popping up in *Basket Case II* is Ted Sorel, who played Dr. Pretorius in Stuart Gordon's *From Beyond* and is herein featured as a retired detective hot on the trail of the Bradley boys. "He dies a miserable death," levins promises.

He also assures that *Basket Case II* will be entirely different from its predecessor. "We all know what's in the basket," levins says, "so we have to do something different." That something different will be in evidence come March, 1990, when *Basket Case II* is released. *Frankenhooker* is scheduled for a late January or early February 1990 release. Whether both flicks will play in theaters before hitting home



Franking out at the picnic.

video remains to be seen. It's a lot tougher getting theatrical playdates for low budget horror flicks than it used to be. "Getting a film into theaters is downright impossible these



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**1990:
THE YEAR OF THE ZOMBIE!!**



Frankenhooker. Here's the title character (Patty Mullen) moments before reanimation.



In order to build the beautiful Frankenhooker, beautiful parts had to be gathered and sewn together. Here's some parts now!

days," levins declares. "You've got *Batman*, *Raiders III*, and one little indie, what do you think the people will go for?"

Meanwhile, back on the set, the congenial and energetic levins

shows no signs of fatigue despite the fourteen- and sixteen-hour days necessary to get the movies completed on time and on budget. In fact, morale seems high among the 85-member crew (which sometimes

goes to 100, depending upon the complexity of the day's shoot), despite the fact that they've all been working virtually non-stop for almost twenty weeks, since May 1989. Though the shoots have gone fairly smoothly thus far, there are always unforeseen problems, including occasional special effects glitches and script rewrites. Henenlotter sometimes finds it necessary to adjust the scripts to fit the actors' personalities.

Handling the special effects will be 24-year-old Gabe Bartalos, whose previous credits include *Gorillas in the Mist*, *Fright Night II*, *Fatal Images*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*, and *The Outing*, among others. Bartalos, who also worked on *Brain Damage*, enjoys working with Henenlotter. "Frank's films let me go all the way," he says, and nowhere will this be more evident than in *Basket Case II*, where more than a dozen genuinely disturbing prosthetic creature masks will be utilized, including "Tumor Face," "Froggy," and "Nosy," who sports some 25 honkers. In *Frankenhooker*, Bartalos promises no less than "eight exploding women," victims of the maniacal Dr. Frankenhooker.

Keeping an eye on things for Shapiro-Glickenhau Productions is Frank Isaac, who serves as executive in charge of production for both *Basket Case II* and *Frankenhooker*, making sure the shoots remain on schedule and on budget. Isaac is clearly enjoying his job. "It's been a very interesting and positive experience," he says. "Frank Henenlotter brings much originality to filmmaking. He has a terrific sense of the genre, which is what makes it appealing. He has a great sense of humor; the films don't take themselves too seriously. They're fun." Also on the horizon for Shapiro-Glickenhau Entertainment are the upcoming *Moontrap* and *One Man Force*. One of the last independents (along with the infamous Troma), SGE, says levins, is one of the last bastions of indie producing. "They care about quality. They're tough, but who isn't? How are you going to stay in business?"

1990 will be the Year of Henenlotter, and there doesn't seem to be any doubt around the set that both *BC II* and *Frankenhooker* should give everyone a healthy jolt of adrenaline. We asked if there was any word on Henenlotter's next project (including a rumored sequel to *Brain Damage*), but levins is mum. "Frank's loaded with ideas. There's more in the reservoir." **CTD**

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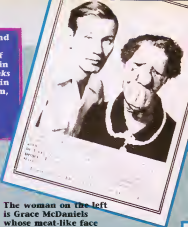
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The most stunning and controversial cinematic examination of real-life freaks came in Todd Browning's *Freaks* (1932, M-G-M). Here, in a scene from that film, Coo-Koo the Bird Woman has a chat with Olga Roderick, the bearded lady.



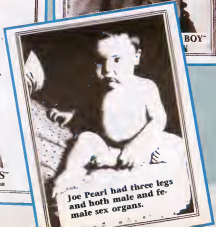
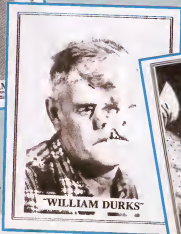
The woman on the left is Grace McDaniels whose meat-like face was red and raw with birthmark. The guy on the left is her son.

Theodor Peteroff of Russia (known in freak shows as Jo-Jo the Dog-Faced Boy) suffered from Congenital Hypertrichosis lanuginosa.



Out of Betty Lou's side grew two legs and one arm of what would have been her twin sister.

William Durks had two noses and a severe hairlip. For his act in a freak show a third eye was painted in.



Joe Pearl had three legs and both male and female sex organs.

Robert Melvin was the "Man With Two Faces." Amazingly, Melvin married a normal looking woman and raised a family.

Now available at a novelty store near you are Freakards (Shel-Tone Publications). Here we see Siamese twins attached at the skull.

The horrors of birth defects due to drug use were examined in the tabloids of the sixties.

INFORMER 50¢ **Teenage Witchcraft**
READER MEMBERS' CIRCULAR NUMBER 32 PAGES
 WILD DRUG PRODUCES MEDICAL FIRST!
HIPPY GIRL ON DRUGS
HAD THIS |BABY| and . . .

2 MEN WERE THE FATHERS
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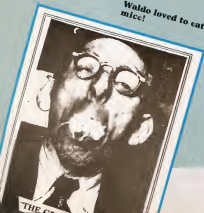
REAL-LIFE FREAKS!

As promised, here are the pictures of actual human oddities!

The dinner scene in Freaks. That's dwarf Angelo Rossitto on the left, and Johnny Eck, the man with only half a body with the knife. A couple of pinheads are visible on the right.

Lentini had three legs and two sets of male genitals.

Waldo loved to eat mice!



BOOGER MAN

Part 3: Olfactory Fire

This is Neal's story. Neal is a young man whose problems include severe headaches, disturbing dreams, a highly developed sense of smell, and occasional blackouts accompanied by uncontrollable outbursts of violent behavior. Neal's closest friend is Jerry, a talking animal of mixed species that lives in his head. Last issue, Reddy B, a man with a tattoo of Africa on his face, hired Neal to scrape the word "SHAME" into the doorways of New York City, work paid for by an organization called the Church of the Revolutionary Light. Neal's first morning on the job was interrupted by the arrival of the morning's papers, reporting the arrival in the New York area of "The Philly Snot Killer," reports accompanied by a police sketch of his own face...

Nothing gets your mind off your problems, big or small, quicker than the sight of your own blood.

I guess I was feeling kind of nervous, what with my picture in the paper and all. When I get nervous I start to toy with my face—that's what my Mom used to call it; "Don't toy with your face," she used to say. Anyway, my hand kind of wandered to my face without me even thinking about it, and I discovered a pimple, a teensy little bump, right on the tip of my nose. I could even picture it by its feel, a small bright red spot, with a yellow-white dot punctuating its center, shielded by a translucently

thin layer of skin. I guess I sort of scratched at it, and my finger came away bloodied.

I looked down my nose and saw a little red pearl growing there. I rubbed away the blood, but then another red globe grew in its place. I continued to rub the blood away, until both of my hands were smeared with rusty stains, while next to me Reddy B railed on about sprouts and whole grains.

**I sunk my teeth
into her nose,
tasted the salt of her
blood and snot as
my hand closed
tightly around her
neck.**

But it kept bleeding, it just wouldn't stop, and my hands were getting really caked over with blood. Reddy B's diet advice came to a halt when he finally noticed.

"Hey homes, you're bleedin'!" He pulled my hand away from my nose. "Don't be rubbin' that, you gotta let it scab over. How'd you do that to yourself?"

I told him about the pimple.

"There ya go! That's from the fats in the red meat you been eatin'!" My nose was dripping blood. Reddy B dug around in his pocket, coming up with a tissue, and he dabbed at my nose.

"Let's get that gunk wash' off your hands," he said, and, after handing me the tissue—one bright red spot

on it—he started loping across 68th street.

I followed him, again rushing to keep up with his broad stride, until he entered a diner on Lexington Avenue.

"You go on back into the men's room." He waved toward the back of the diner as he eased into a booth by the window. I hesitated.

Public bathrooms are not an easy thing for me. While the restaurant looked bright and clean, the smell of old grease was already making me nauseous, and—considering the kind of food this place probably served—I knew that this place's men's room was going to be very hard to take.

But my nose was still dripping blood (the tissue was covered with red dots by now) and my hands were sticky and crusty. I headed back toward the door marked "Men."

The smell hit me before I opened the door, but that was only a dull foretaste of the stinking wave that washed over me when I entered the closet-sized room. It looked clean—spotless blue tile, fixtures gleaming in white porcelain and stainless steel—but the smell was like an evil, living beast. I caught my breath and hit the faucet handle with my hand's heel. Water tumbled into the tiny sink. I soaked up my hands and risked another breath.

It was a bad idea; the room swirled and stinging glowbugs were all in my eyes. Though I had the sensation of falling backwards, it was my face—my nose—that hit the sink on my way to the floor.

Being unconscious did nothing to stop the stink. And I could see the beast now, radiating decay and rot, a hulking yellow monster speckled in brown, its steaming breath almost visible with stench. We stood facing each other in a kind of noplacé, eye to bloodshot eye. Death was in its eye, my death, and I could see its muscles tense under bristling fur, tensing for a leap. And then it sprang.

In the fraction of a moment that the creature hung in the air, another dark figure appeared between us, and then the two beasts—Jerry and the Stink monster—were a single ball of spit and fur, all raking claws and gnashing teeth. The Stinker was the larger, and the more savage of the two; its jaw clamped on Jerry's ear, it began to dig into Jerry's stomach with its rear talons, digging into his stomach like a dog shoveling into soft earth. The Hawaiian shirt Jerry was wearing was quickly shredded; soon there was a flap of fur hanging loose from Jerry's belly, the monster's feet enmeshed in a network of



PETER
BERNARD

PHIL
DAWG
"IT'S A DAWG'S LIFE AND
LUNCH"

intestines. My own stomach rolled and boiled with the sight of it, but Jerry just reached to the sheath strapped to his ankle; steel flashed, and a stinking viscous tar oozed, bubbling, from a seam Jerry had knifed open in the creature's hide following the ridged line of its backbone. Still it dug further into Jerry's middle, but Jerry reached into the gooey opening, grasping something, working it left and right until it came free with an audible rip. Then there was a long moist sucking sound as he pulled a yellow-white length of flesh from the thing's back. The Stinker went immediately rigid as the white thing, like an eyeless snake, whipped itself around Jerry's neck; but Jerry grabbed its head in his fist and squeezed until there was a crunch, and a cheesy yellow paste oozed through his clenched fingers.

We were back in the tiny men's room; I was sitting on the floor op-

posite the toilet where Jerry sat, catching his breath and gathering his internal organs, stuffing them into the cavern beneath his ribs. The stench was no better with the Stinker dead, but somehow having Jerry there with me helped me to tolerate it. He said nothing at first, but materialized a needle and thread from somewhere and began sewing the flap of flesh that hung from his abdomen back into place.

"You've got a gift for finding trouble, Neal," he finally said. "A real gift."

How was I supposed to know that thing was lurking in here?

"I wasn't talking about the Stinker. The newspapers."

Yeah. The papers. It's weird, but I never thought about myself as the "snot killer" before. I'd seen the name in the headlines before I left Philadelphia, but I never really read the papers and—while I knew I had done some bad things—I always thought the "snot killer" was somebody else. I guess seeing it in the paper like that, with my picture right there, made it seem real, and really serious, and really bad.

When I was little, I would do things that I'd forget about, then

people would tell me about some horrible thing that happened to their cat or something, and they'd be like really mad, but the whole time I felt sure that somebody else had done it, whatever it was, even when I kind of remembered it happening. If I remembered anything, it seemed like I was sitting in a corner of the room while kitty went down the garbage disposal, not able to see who was doing it, with no way to stop it. Scratches on my arm, and no idea how they got there.

I remember things better now—Jerry helps me with remembering—but it's still kinda spotty. Things happen, I get mad, and then my head starts to feel like a giant bubble that's about to burst and I do things. Sometimes I remember them real well, but other times I can't even remember them, I swear! It's weird.

Jerry says I'm a lot more fun when I'm "in gear," by which he means

didn't see; all was fur around me and as I rocked with his gentle tread, I fell into a deep, soft, welcome sleep.

And then I was back in Philadelphia, back at my job in the Philly Dawg, bussing tables and wiping up spills of ketchup, beans, mustard, chili...for I don't know how long.

Then she entered, crying. She was beautiful, even with her eyes all red and puffy, even with the bruise across her right cheek, just as before. In the dream I was seeing her for the first time, but still some other part of me remembered seeing her before in my waking life, remembered and compared. This time I understood better the things that she said, understood her anger and was able to hold her hand in sympathy. This time my stomach didn't boil when she displayed her flesh, and when I saw the tattoo I didn't see needles and ink and flesh, self-mutilation; instead I saw the beauty and simplicity of a single rose. This time I held her close as she cried, just as I knew she wanted me to, held her and even cried with her and then...

...and then I sunk my teeth into her nose, tasted the salt of her blood and snot as my hand closed tightly around her neck, the hot flesh of her neck that grew hotter as the fear frenzied her heart, her heart leaping in her chest as if it had hope of escape, but it had no more hope than she as we slid to the floor of the Philly Dawg and rolled on the tile, rolled in the blood, mostly hers but some of it mine as she raked and tore at me with her nails, while I continued to feed at the gaping hole in the middle of her face, sucking clean her sinuses and her veins at the same time, feeling her warmth filling me, filling me until there was no more coldness in me at all, none anywhere, and I was finally at peace, calmed by this borrowed warmth...

When I awoke, I was strapped to a bed. That was the first thing I noticed, when I couldn't lift my arms. Then I realized that I couldn't move my head at all; it was somehow locked into place. Then I saw the bandage that covered my nose and, with crossed eyes focused on the center of my face, I found a long, thick needle penetrating my skull directly between my eyebrows. Of course I screamed.

"Ah, you're awake," a voice said, and then a man dressed in white—a doctor—stepped into my frozen view. "Young man, are you aware that you have quite an extensive brain tumor?"

TO BE CONTINUED... (16)

The smell hit me before I opened the door, but it was only a dull foretaste of the stinking wave that washed over me when I entered the closet-sized room.

when I can clearly remember the things that I do. He says he wants to help me learn to like myself better; this diary was his idea, as a way to help me remember stuff. And he reminds me of things, especially how good it feels...

But now he just sat, his big furry body overflowing the toilet seat, mending his torn hide. Finally, he looked up; red sparks danced in his eyes.

"It's all right," he said. "It's all right because I smell your destiny. And it's coming soon."

Of course, that made me feel better. Jerry has ways of knowing things nobody else does.

"But the thing for now is to get out of here. How do you feel? Can you walk?"

I didn't think so.

"That's all right," he said, and he scooped me up from the floor in his arms. The rotting dead Stink monster faded even from memory when I pressed my face into Jerry's doggy-musk-smelling fur.

As he walked, out of the men's room, through the restaurant, into the street, I imagine people must have been surprised at this large, what-is-it animal carrying a boy, but I

HUMAN FIREBALLS!

by DANIEL SCHWEIGER

It's bad enough that he's a victim of a decades-old atomic experiment—but now everything he touches melts!

Tobe Hooper goes up in flames in *Spontaneous Combustion*

Sam (Brad Dourif) causes human spontaneous combustion. Kinda smells like burning chicken!

A nuclear reaction occurs as your body's metabolism accelerates to friction. Water won't put out the flames, since they feed on their own oxygen. In seconds, you're reduced to essential fats and oils. Some believe that supernatural forces cause the reaction, as the victim becomes a focus for poltergeist activity.*

Tobe Hooper has a ghoulish enthusiasm in his voice when explaining the results of *Spontaneous*



Combustion, a terrifying phenomenon far deadlier than any chainsaw-wielding giant or space vampire. With this spring release, Hooper has reteamed with effects whiz John Dykstra for a production that will go beyond *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre's* chills and *Lifeforce's* knockout visuals, as an unsuspecting teacher masters this explosive power.

"Spontaneous human combustion was so fantastic that it sounded like an old wives tale," remarks the 47-year-old Texan. "But then I saw a documentary where TV reporters accompanied firemen on emergencies. They'd arrive at apartments where people had been incinerated like flash bulbs, but it couldn't have been from smoking in bed. Lace curtains 18 feet away from them were unsinged, and all the plastic inside their refrigerators had melted. That's what compelled me to film *Spontaneous Combustion*, since the cases where so wonderful and weird, and very little research had been done on them."


Hooper searched in morgues and libraries for evidence of the ghastly deaths. "I discovered that the English called it 'Fire from Heaven,' but that stopped in the mid 1800s when a clergyman was engulfed. Since then, the event's been called 'spontaneous human combustion.' Dickens even wrote about it in *Bleak House*."

But for his film, Tobe took a decidedly modern slant on the phenomenon's origins. "I wanted spontaneous combustion to be a side effect of the nuclear age. Just look at how the government's devised weapons that will incinerate people, but leave buildings untouched! My protagonist embodies that sense of

betrayal by the Powers-that-be, and the combustions mirror his tormented emotions."

Spontaneous Combustion opens during 1955's nuclear dawn, and "The Bomb" was as much a fad as hula-hoops. Brian Jones and his expectant wife Peggy (Stacey Edwards and Brian Bremer) turn themselves into atomic guinea pigs for a radiation-proof vaccine, even though their bomb shelter is perilously close to the blast. The couple emerge all smiles from the A-bomb to collect \$10,000 from bunker-builder Lewis Olander (Network's William Prince).

But a side effect becomes apparent after Peggy's delivery. Her baby exhibits a weird, circular birthmark on his hand. Little Sam is soon orphaned when a thermometer splatters mercury on Brian and Peggy, igniting them in front of the aghast scientist Nina (*Close Encounters'* Melinda Dillon). When the fire dissipates, charred corpses of "America's first nuclear family" are



A one-eyed scientist examines the remains of Peggy (Stacey Edwards) and husband Brian (Brian Bremer), victims of the snap, crackle, pop disease.



scattered about the otherwise spotless room. The only apparent cause behind the human fireballs is spontaneous combustion.

Flash-forward to 1989 and Sam Kramer's (*Cuckoo's Nest's* Brad Dourif) 34th birthday, where the high school instructor remains puzzled by his hand's growing discoloration. His students are equally upset by a nearby nuclear plant that goes on-line at midnight. Sam's mood lightens up when he finds an unexpected gift in his car, his late father's watch. Mercury soon drops onto the teacher's wrist.

After school, Sam blows out the candles with his pseudo-father, the now-infirm Olander. At the party is Sam's ex-wife Rachel (Dey Young) and her shifty scientist boyfriend, Dr. Marsh (*Hill Street Blues'* John Cypher). The sight of them is enough to cause Sam's anguish to grow, and his finger to split open

with an energy shock. When he calls his girlfriend Lisa's (*Pumpkinhead's* Cynthia Bain) answering machine, it melts upon response.

Sam is fortunate enough to tune in on a radio forum about spontaneous combustion, but a technician (director John Landis) refuses to link him with the speaker. Suddenly the ingrate bursts into flames as Sam's arm erupts with multi-colored power. Lisa finds her horrified lover and races to meet Marsh and his assistant, Dr. Cagney (Michael Keys Hall) at the hospital. When Cagney attempts to mainline Sam with isotopes, the shifty researcher becomes another victim of spontaneous human combustion. Realizing that only Nina can explain these terrible outbursts, Sam tracks her down only to discover his unwilling participation in a decades-old atomic experiment.

The knowledge drives Sam mad, dissolving his human frame into an energy creature capable of jetting through power lines. With his newfound abilities, Sam proceeds to wreak havoc on the scientific conspiracy. His main target is Lisa, who's been giving him suspicious pill doses for years. It doesn't matter if Sam has to cause a nuclear meltdown to get to her.

Spontaneous Combustion seems to follow the genre craze for evil energy beings, like those in *The Horror Show* and *Shocker*. Hooper, however, has added his own touches of realism. "My old script started out like

Here are some of John Dykstra's effects. Sam's ex-wife Rachel (Dey Young) falls victim to SHC. (All photos compliments of Flaherty/Winters & Partners.)

When the fire dissipates, charred corpses of "America's first nuclear family" are scattered about the otherwise spotless room.



Spontaneous human combustion causes the human head to shrink. That's the size of Brian's skull after he did his Richard Pryor imitation.



Brad Dourif shows signs of wear and tear as a result of his being the sole offspring of "America's First Nuclear Family."

those films, but I realized, as writing progressed, that the concept had become too far out. I had to come back down to Earth for the humanism, and *Spontaneous Combustion* ended up being more film noir than horror film. Sam is like John Garfield with this God Almighty problem, especially because he doesn't realize what's happening to his body. Like *Chainsaw*, I wanted the events to occur in a single day, as Sam's powers unravel. You're onto more incredible discoveries by the minute as he finds that his whole life's been designed by the government.

Hooper's gone from such visceral terrors as *Eaten Alive* and *The Funhouse* to humorous, effects-oriented films like *Lifeforce* and *Invaders from Mars*. But now he's come full circle with *Spontaneous Combustion*, using visual trickery to create a decidedly unpleasant tone.

"I want to wrap viewers' spinal cords up with the flames. One of my victims might be John Landis, but I guarantee you won't be laughing when the combustion starts. It's a terrible thing to watch as tendrils

and jets of fire explode from his body. However, there are so many effects occurring around them that the picture doesn't have time to really be gory."

After handling human fireballs for *Tobe's Invaders* and *Lifeforce*, John Dykstra (*Star Wars*) has once again supervised the flashy pyrotechnics for *Spontaneous Combustion*. "His biggest job was making the phenomena look terrifying, since fire can appear very passive, even when you shove a camera into it. So we researched energy and spirit forms, and came up with 20-foot flames bursting from people's heads. The corpses are impressionistic, with the face reduced to baseball size and the bodies totally drained of moisture. A lot of the effects are based on Roman Candle combustion, where flames start at the head until only the feet are left. Nothing will resemble a stuntman with his shirt on fire."

Spontaneous Combustion's \$7 million budget might mark a comedown from such mega-value productions as *Lifeforce* and *Poltergeist*, but the constraints only increased his resourcefulness. "I've learned that it doesn't matter how much you spend on a film, because you'll always end up trading problems from high to low budgets. *Spontaneous* might have only cost a few million, but it looks as expensive as anything I've done. I wasn't going to make any compromises with my style or characters, and that kind of purity attracts people who are willing to give their best for less pay."

Hooper's eccentric talent quickly enticed Brad Dourif to the explosive role of Sam. One of Hollywood's most chilling character actors, Dourif's rogues gallery includes *Mississippi Burning's* wife-beating bigot and *Child's Play's* homicidal human doll. "Probably the most unusual thing about *Spontaneous Combustion* is that Brad plays it straight! I've always been a big fan of his, and I wanted to take that weird edge off him. Sam is sympathetic, and you feel the pain he goes through as he becomes this fire creature. But I was sure to give Brad plenty of lines where he could show off his psycho-killer quality."

Though Hooper's concluded *Spontaneous Combustion* ambiguously enough for Sam to rise from the ashes (if profits demand), no one could accuse Tobe of adding to the cult of the killer. Freddy, Jason, and Michael all owe their blood-drenched existences to Leatherface, the gore generation's first superstar. "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre might

end up being my *Citizen Kane*, since in 1974 it was the first horror film of its kind. Leatherface left such an impression on people that they weren't able to comprehend the picture's humor until five years later," its director had little to do with the latest sequel, though he wasn't particularly heartbroken by it. "I never had an intention of shooting *Chainsaw III*, but I was going to exec produce it. When *Spontaneous Combustion* came along, it prevented any involvement I might have had. I still haven't seen the new Leatherface, but I've heard that he employs some of my ideas."

Tobe's amused when viewers refer to *Chainsaw* as the most disgusting movie they've seen, though there's little blood in it. The ability to play with peoples' minds in *Chainsaw* and *Spontaneous Combustion* has made Hooper a true toxic titan, all without showing one intestine. "I love subliminal imagery, since it's pulling a massive sleight-of-hand with my audience. *Chainsaw* has a great example when a woman gets hung on a meathook, dried blood all over the meat-processing room. When those two images are put together, you think there's blood pouring out of her. Tricks like that help to strengthen the story."

"I went to this subliminal exhibition, where a guy on screen asked what everyone was thinking. A triangle came to my mind, and that's because there was a hazy, triangular image flashing by every 24 frames. You've got to layer images on top of images for that kind of unknowing impact. I'm going to expand that subliminal process soon, though I haven't been able to figure out if it's legal or not. But one thing I will never do is subject ticket buyers to real mutilations, since no one wants permanent damage done to the psyches."

For all of the spectacular graphic effects that Hooper will employ with *Spontaneous Combustion*, it's always been his film's quieter moments that have generated the best chills, as characters flirt with unseen menaces that will ultimately consume them. "Before *Chainsaw*, thrillers had such profit motivations as 'let's scare the old bitch to death for her money!' But I've learned that you have to give audiences creeps on top of the scares. It's the essence of death that really freaks people out, something which I embodied with Leatherface," Hooper remarks. "But just when I think I've become immune to those types of jolts, I'll see something on the late show that will really freak me out!"

CELE

Isa Andersen, an exotic beauty from Eastern Europe, won the role of Lilith over 2000 other actresses.

THE POWER OF SATAN'S SQUEEZE!

by DAVID TAGART

The Queen of Hell arouses the carnal in *Deliver Us From Evil!*

Swiss-French director Dominique Othenin-Girard, who brought to the screen *Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers*, said "She's only an appearance of seduction, of beauty. In fact, she's a monstrous being." He spoke of Lilith, the demonic Queen of Hell, "worshipped in ancient Babylon, known to Hebrew Kabbalists, a nightmarish vixen who slays her victims by plunging her fingernails

into their chests then drawing their blood into her veins in Paragon Arts' March release *Deliver Us From Evil*.

"What concerns me is to be able to touch the heart and guts of the audience," said Othenin-Girard, "as well as the mind. That's hypnotic."

Lilith (Isa Andersen) rises from the primordial swamp, muck moistening her slithering, tempting form. She refuses to be subservient to man and seduces the publisher of *SIREN*,

a top fashion magazine, before severing his flesh and sending her possessed photographs to his heir, Karim Khan.

"We want the audience to feel that Lilith exists," said executive producer Walter Josten. "Somewhere...."

"What fascinates me is the ancient myth of Lilith mixing in today's world," Othenin-Girard added. "There's a man, woman and two kinds of love: lust and the other, profound, deep and God-like."

Lilith, according to legend, has copulated with demons (before degenerating into one) and is capable of arousing the carnal in either the buttonholed or the venerate. The world of high-fashion becomes a lusty, camera-clicking garden to satisfy her appetites—with admirers/victims sent crashing through a plate glass window or plummeting down an elevator shaft.

"I used a constant camera (approach) running, floating, looking, sometimes caressing," said Othenin-Girard. "It tunes to an erotic being."

Lovers Linden Ashby and Debra Feller must withstand the entrancing power of "Satan's whore." In an outlandish Hell Party sequence Ashby encounters a male-female pair of Siamese twins, a woman with faces under her breasts, and a figure whose eyes blow up.

"It is kind of *Dante's Inferno*," describes Josten, "a taste of what life might be like in the underworld. Sensuality has always been linked with horror films. It's inherent in the genre."

"I contacted astrologers to have Lilith's chart made," Othenin-Girard



As we always suspected, the essence of comedy and tragedy lay bouyant on a woman's chest.

All photos copyright Night Angel Partners/Paragon Arts International

***Deliver Us From Evil's* FX are by Steve Johnson as well as Bob Kurtzman, Howard Berger and Greg Nicotero of KNB EFX Group.**



added. "Clairvoyants talked with us and warned me not to deal with the subject."

The occult research brought insight into Lilith's character, symbols, and even the colors selected for Isa Andersen's hair and wardrobe by the French Emmy-winning director.

"We researched from Hieronymus Bosch to ancient civilizations," said Othenin-Girard. "We asked what she would do in certain situations, how would she react? She moves with fire and water, she is a child-killer."

Lilith mesmerizes on the dance floor, turns the staff of SIREN to her tantalizing will, and kidnaps Debra Feuer.

"A director is always an outlaw," said Othenin-Girard. "Creating a real, evil person who is feminine is very difficult. I've analyzed the (horror) market. *Nightmare on Elm Street* is the surrealistic world of special effects, *Friday the 13th* is a

reign every four minutes where you don't care for the characters and *Halloween* is a few characters, one gets to know, under the pleasure of Michael Myers."

"Once the narrative is inside the frame, it doesn't satisfy me. I need the emotional impact of action. Often the scenes scripted into horror movies are not middle-of-the-road but extreme situations. They offer great freedom of expression because you can be extremely over-the-top in the telling of the story as long as one is inside the emotions."

Deliver Us From Evil's stunning finale is in a haunted forest as Ashby stalks Lilith with a sacred dagger. He

tries to slay her but her powers are too strong to resist. But, as Lilith begins her ghastly ritual of death, she must contend with Ashby's true love, Debra Feuer.

Two special effects teams—one headed by Steve Johnson (*The Abyss*), the other comprised of Bob Kurtzman, Howard Berger, and Greg Nicotero of the KNB EFX Group (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers*)—were responsible for Lilith's transformation into the heinous being she really is.

"The ending needed something grand," said Othenin-Girard. "She comes from Satan."



This cannibal babe needs a moist towelette!

Fangs for the mammaries! One of the guests at the Hell Party.



Snakes fly out of Lilith's mouth. She beats her leathery wings in anger. Her shape swells to hideous proportions.

Lilith (Isa Anderson) rises from the primordial swamp, muck moistening her slithering, tempting form.

collide, is a warning.

Isa Andersen, an exotic beauty from Eastern Europe who won the role over 2,000 other actresses, vanishes in a pillar of fire. Lilith's picture is published on the cover of SIREN magazine. Has the nightmare ended? We'll have to wait for box office figures to find out. **COO**

Snakes fly out of Lilith's mouth. She beats her leathery wings in anger. Her shape swells to hideous proportions.

"If you've never seen Lilith, it hits home even harder," said Walter Josten. "We don't want to make the public sick, it's a metamorphosis."

There are many different layers to *Deliver Us From Evil*, said Othenin-Girard. "Ancient myth and modern values, seeing these worlds

ERRATUM

In our review of *Evil Dead II* on page 9 of TOXIC HORROR #2, we incorrectly identified the director as Mark Shostrom. Sam Raimi directed the movie. Raimi and Scott Spiegel wrote the screenplay.

Remember, boys and girls,
drink out of the OPEN end!
Photo from *Henry: Portrait of
a Serial Killer* (SGE).

WHAT'S YOUR VOTE FOR THE ALL- TIME TOXIC TOP TEN?

What are your all-time favorite TOXIC films (or videos)? We'd like to know. Fill out the blank below and send it to us. Our address is: TOXIC HORROR, 475 Park Avenue South, New York NY, 10016.

If you don't know what TOXIC means, don't mess with it. If you don't want to cut up the mag, you can write your Top Ten on your own piece of paper. Please, one vote per person. We'll print the results in a future issue.

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MY NAME? LYNCH. MY GAME? WORDSMITH. I POUND OUT A LITTLE SHAKESPEARE-ON-THE-KEYS FOR A RAG CALLED THE LOS ANGELES SENTINEL. IN MY BUSINESS, I ALWAYS FIND THAT SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING DETAILS ARE OFTEN UNFIT FOR PUBLICATION ...

FACE-OFF

A TOXIC 'TOON BY MARK VOGEL

NO! NO! THIS ISN'T HAPPENING! YOU AREN'T REAL! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGHHHH!

YOU'LL NEVER CALL ME "PIZZA FACE" AGAIN!

SCREEETT!

HEH, HEH. YOU KNOW WHAT I ALWAYS SAY ...

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A FRESH, YOUNG FACE!

CUT!

(SIGH) THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO BREAK INTO MOVIES!

PRINT IT! "PIZZA FACE V" IS IN THE CAN! MY THANKS TO EVERYBODY!

CLIFF MARTLING — KNOWN TO MILLIONS OF MOVIEGOERS AS "PIZZA FACE" — MEET LYNCH OF THE LOS ANGELES SENTINEL.

WE'RE DOING A PEECE ON THE "PIZZA FACE" PHENOMENON ... THE MOVIES, TV SERIES, DOLLS, LUNCH BOXES ...

I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU, GENTLEMEN, BUT FIRST I MUST REMOVE MY MAKEUP.

IN PRIVACY.

SLAM!



YEAH... CLIFF MARTLING WAS VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT HIS MAKEUP. NOT SINCE THE 1920S—IN THE DAYS OF LON CHANEY SR. — HAS A MOVIE ACTOR DESIGNED AND APPLIED HIS OWN MAKEUP.



"HE CAME ON THE SCENE AS AN UNKNOWN IN 'PIZZA FACE I'."

"... THE MOVIE TOOK THE WORLD BY STORM."

"... THE MAN BEHIND THE MAKEUP KEPT A LOW PROFILE."

"... EXCEPT FOR HIS RECENT, LAVISH WEDDING TO AN ASPIRING BLONDE ACTRESS."

WHO — WHILE MARTLING AND I BEGAN OUR INTERVIEW AT THE STUDIO — WAS LANGUISHING BY THE POOL OF MARTLING'S MANSION IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS.

I KNOW HE LOOKS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN HERVE VILLECHAIZE AND ARNOLD THE PIG! BUT AT LEAST I'M NOT SCRAPING BY IN THAT WEST HOLLYWOOD RAT TRAP GOING TO AUDITIONS AND (UGH!) WAITING ON TABLES!

HOLLYWOOD





CHICK!



YOUNG MAN? WOULD YOU PUT SOME LOTION ON MY BACK?

I CAN'T REACH.



SURETAN LOTION



WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR NEW BRIDE?



SHE'S AN ANGEL FROM GOD. AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M NO MEL GIBSON ...

BUT I KNOW SHE LOVES ME FOR ME, NOT MY FAME AND MONEY ...



"I'VE ASKED HER A MILLION TIMES ..."

DO YOU REALLY LOVE ME FOR ME?

YES, CLIFFORD.



AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HAVE TO CUT THIS INTERVIEW SHORT.



MMMMGGG ... WHAT ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND ...

MMMMGGG ... DON'T SWEAT IT. HE SAID HE HAS TO STAY LATE FOR AN INTERVIEW OR SOMETHING ...



... WE HAVE SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE. I'M FULFILLING ONE OF HER LIFELONG DREAMS



"I GOT HER A PART IN MY NEXT MOVIE."



"I HAVE TO RUSH HOME TO TELL HER."

DO
YOU
STILL
LOVE
ME
FOR
ME??

AAAAAAGHHH!!!

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
A FRESH, YOUNG FACE!

[illegible]

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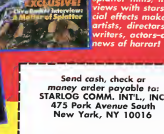
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